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THE MINOR ACTS OF OUR LORD

AND

SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

CONSIDERED IN A SHORT COURSE OF PRACTICAL SERMONS

BY

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PREFACE.

The words *major* or *minor* cannot intrinsically be applied to any action of Almighty God, howsoever minute or seeming wanting in significance it may appear to the cursory reader of Holy Scripture. With much diffidence therefore the writer has ventured to characterize those actions which form as it were the *conjunctions* of the life of our Blessed Lord as being certain "minor acts." In many of the more or less modern commentators upon the New Testament they are passed by without any notice whatsoever, or at most with a geographical or historical mention. In vain were the pages turned over of Rosenmüler, of Kuinoel, of Bengell, of the Synopsis of the Critici Sacri, of various works on "Christology" of "The Messiah," with several well-known English editions of the Greek Testament, which in their own line and from their particular standpoint of religious belief, are by very many regarded with a veneration almost equal to that of the sacred oracles themselves; their zealous readers being the worshippers of revised versions and of uncial texts. Thence from the dry bones of this barren land as into a very spiritual Canaan was the writer led into those pastures so full of that devout refection, instruction, and practical teaching which the Holy Fathers, Doctors and Spiritual writers of the Church can alone furnish. In them we found these "Minor Acts," when mentioned, to be, not a mere question of geography, history, "various readings," and the like, but expressions of the living love, truth and power which flowed from men who had "the mind of Christ," and who were the representatives of the ever living, ever enduring Holy Catholic Church of the Redeemer.

It seemed to be consistent with the writer's purpose that the original authorities for each several statement upon which the sermons have been founded should be given, so that any priest making use of this book for preaching, or instruction, might speak with greater confidence, as relying more implicitly upon the statements made by the saints and doctors of the Church. Should this first instalment be favourably received, it will be a work of love to prepare a second series for publication.

May these simple sermons shed a few rays of light in the right direction, and lead other and more able men to illumine this same sacred pathway with a clearer and brighter vision, as tending to the greater glory of God.

THE TITLES OF THE SERMONS.

PAGE.

I.—JESUS TURNING 1

II.—JESUS BREATHING ON HIS DISCIPLES 13

III.—JESUS LED UP 25

IV.—JESUS DWELLING IN CAPERNAUM ... 37

V.—JESUS COMING 49

VI.—JESUS SLEEPING 61

VII.—JESUS PASSING THROUGH 71

VIII.—JESUS FOLLOWING 83

IX.—JESUS HIDING 93

X.—JESUS SITTING DOWN 103

XI.—JESUS GOING INTO THE HOUSE ... 112

XII.—JESUS DEPARTING 121

XIII.—JESUS SILENT 130

XIV.—JESUS STANDING STILL 141

XV.—JESUS STOOPING DOWN 152

XVI.—JESUS CRYING 164

XVII.—JESUS CALLING 177

Sermons on the Minor Acts of our Lord.

Jesus Turning.

S. Matt. ix. 22.—"Jesus turned Him about."

JESUS turned Himself about to the woman with an issue of blood, not that He needed to do this, since He was able to see her perfectly without so doing. The poor woman was strong in faith, suffering and sorrowful as she was, so that the large loving heart of the Lord was drawn to her at once. He wished, therefore, that the woman should know that He saw her, and that she might gain a full consciousness of the significance of her act in touching the hem of His garment. He "turned Him about" to her before He spoke the words of comfort and of healing. This turning was the Lord's outward recognition of the true devotion and homage which the woman had tendered to Him Let this be to ourselves a sign and a token that our smallest service will be accepted by Him if only it be offered with a sincere faith

and intention to do Him honour. In respect of any offering that we can give unto the Lord, the thought should ever be "O Lord, it is not what I would give to Thee, but that which I can; do Thou in love and mercy deign to receive it from me all unworthy as I am." Let no one therefore fear to approach the throne of grace; for this very weakness and inefficiency is in itself a mighty factor in our supplications to Almighty God. He cares not for, since He desires not our offerings in themselves, but that which He does desire to affect, is that our souls may have a longing and an intention to come to Him; even we can but touch the hem of His garment in His sacraments of love and mercy; that we may be amongst the number of those who desire to fear His name.

Jesus turned Him about in order that He might infuse into this woman prevenient grace and particular help. The beginning of justification in all who have arrived at years of discretion takes its origin from this turning of Jesus to the soul; from this loving favour of His which is called going before, or prevenient grace, since it comes from no existing merit in its recipient. They, therefore, who have been torn away from God by sin, by this exciting

and helping grace converting them; are prepared for their healing or justification by freely answering to, and co-operating with this prevenient grace of God (C.T.). It was this grace which was revealed by the Lord when He turned round to this poor diseased woman; and He is ever now turning spiritually to our souls to emit from His holy eyes a new light, and a new power, a new grace, and a new glory. It is the desire to see spiritually His blessed face that He yearns to find in us, that we may be led to assent to, and co-operate in His loving purposes towards us. Holiness, and the love of Jesus Christ can be forced upon none; therefore is it that, He draws us "with the cords of a man and the bands of love." Shall we, dare we strive to cut these cords asunder, and to untie these loving sacred bands. May God by the power of the Holy Ghost, preserve us from the fatal and unpardonable sin, of receiving the grace of God in vain.

Jesus turned Him about; Towards her, for "the Lord is not unmindful of His faithful servants, but He looks back upon them; that is, He bestows His mercy upon them. His turning signifies the compassion which He has for His church" (H). All the acts of the Lord are so

many several expressions of His divine mind and in this respect they are unlike many of our deeds which are done at random, and are wholly wanting in any definite purpose. Like His holy self they are full of wisdom, there is neither thoughtlessness or carelessness in any of them. When God would punish men for their sins and rebellions, He said, "I will show them the back and not the face in the day of their calamity." David both knew and acknowledged it. "Thou didst hide Thy face and I was troubled;" troubled, because he knew that he must have sinned, otherwise God would not have turned away His face from him. The turning of the Lord towards a man points out His mercy and compassion for him, for "mercy and truth shall go before His face," and will not follow behind His back. As we turn away from a sight of intense misery and suffering, so does the Lord turn away His face from the sight of sin. Happy are they who like the poor afflicted woman, have a strong faith in His power to heal, and who, deeply feeling their own unworthiness, have but to come behind the Lord. It is to such souls as these that He will reveal Himself, showing to such some token for good, for "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace unto the humble."

Jesus turned Himself about. "Not by the motion of the body only, but in assuming an appearance of divinity. Christ was turned to the woman that the woman might be turned to Christ; that she might receive healing from Him, from whom also she had taken life, and that she might also learn that the cause of her present sickness was become to her an affair of perpetual and lasting salvation" (P.C.). We note that the Lord made the first overture to her as to her actual healing. He invited her to come to Him by His turning Himself towards her. Does He never turn Himself likewise to ourselves? Has He never so turned Himself to you, Oh! Christian soul? Has He never revealed Himself to you in the sacrament of the altar, and become known to you at the breaking of bread? Never, again, in answer to any special act of devotion; to any particular prayer; or when you may have applied yourself to Him in an act of contrition and have cried unto Him, sorely stricken with a broken and contrite heart, has He turned to you? Believe it not. Never when the preacher has proclaimed to you His pardon through the precious blood? Never when His own sweet words of invitation have been read to you,

"Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden?" Never, when you have found all earthly hopes blighted, and yourself—for the time, at least—standing as it were alone in the world, has His voice sounded to you as if speaking to yourself, solitary and alone, and refreshing you with the promise: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee?" If such be the case, I beseech you to make trial of His divine and yearning love, since He will never turn away from you, if you do not turn away from Him, but He will ever turn towards you the light of His countenance to make you whole. And more than this, since Christ was turned to the woman that the woman might be turned to Christ, He will most surely turn to you likewise, in and through His priests, His sacraments, His worship — to you as penitents confessing your sins; and even now whilst these words are being uttered He is inviting you to come unto Him that you may have life. But when so invited have you failed to trust Him? Have you rejected His invitation and cast His words behind you? To you, now, whilst you are hearing of Him, He is speaking and bidding you to meet Him half way, that He may turn towards you and that you may

taste and see how gracious the Lord is, and how blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

Jesus turned Himself about; "which turning was an open acknowledgment of her acceptance by Him, wherefore He did not say "thy faith is about to make thee whole," but "thy faith hath made thee whole" (J). On the one hand the Psalmist says "The face of the Lord is against"—that is, turned away from—"them that do evil." On the other hand, when He shows to us the light of His countenance we are made whole. It was the shining of this His countenance that saved Israel, since it was a manifest sign of His favour unto Israel (Ps. xliv. 3). To turn the back upon a person is a sign of contempt, but to turn round to him a mark of attention and respect. This poor woman was accepted, therefore the Lord turned about or round to her. When the sun shines brightly and steadily upon the earth, it is as if God's presence was truly resting upon and refreshing it. New forms of vegetation spring into life, and the very birds rejoice and sing. Trouble, on the other hand, is likened to a season of darkness, as is light to a time of joy. When God turns to us, He shows us the light

of His countenance and we are made whole. May we so live and act, so watch and pray, so repent and perform acts of contrition, that coming thus as it were behind the Saviour in faith and love, He may will to do to us as He did to that poor woman of the olden days of His earthly ministry, and turning towards us in the spirit, He may accept us, and accepting He may bless us. Terrible indeed will be that state of final condemnation if at the last Jesus should be forced to turn His back upon our souls, having died in impenitence. Depart from me, I never knew you; to the devil and his angels with you.

Jesus turned Himself about. He turned Himself from the severity of a just judgment to the bounty of His pity, fulfilling the promise of the prophet, "Return unto Me and I will return unto you" (B). The Lord ever placed mercy before judgment; He was not careful as to seemingly contradicting Himself in order that He might do good to others. "For judgment," He said, "am I come into this world," yet He scrupled not to pardon and to heal, instead of to judge this poor woman. What a sublime and noble lesson does this action read to ourselves, who are but too apt to place our

own prejudices or our dignity and the like, before lending the hand of help and rescue to succour a fallen brother or sister, being forgetful of the fact that "mercy rejoiceth against," or rather, exalts and triumphs over judgment; as being more God-like and divine than itself, and stronger in effect and far more quickly to achieve the end which punitive judgment has in view in its exercise. This turning from severity to kindness, from judgment to mercy, brings infinite blessings in the doing thereof, since "the quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth as the gentle dew from Heaven; it is twice blessed; it blesses him that gives as well as him who takes." Seek we to turn then, as did our blessed Lord to the poor and afflicted, in true sympathy with and compassion for their estate. Put self wholly out of sight; succour the distressed, and the Lord will of a surety return all that you have so offered to Him sevenfold into your own bosom.

Jesus turned Himself about. "That is approving her faith (L). This act was a sign of her acceptation by Him, and remember that a sign often conveys more meaning than many words would do. A look, a momentary expression of countenance is often fraught with such a signi-

ficance that it needs no speech to emphasize its message. At the voice of Jesus in the garden on the early morning of the resurrection, when Mary Magdalene had "turned herself," her recognition of her Master was so complete that she could but reply, "Rabboni," my Master. If we with all our hearts, with all our love, with the desire to know Him and to follow in His blessed steps, turn ourselves to Him, He will surely turn Himself to us, as if He spake, "Seek ye My face," and the heart should answer, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek;" being "accepted," or, better still, "graced" in the Beloved One. What a world of meaning is wrapped up in these few simple words. Jesus turns Himself to us to grace us by His pardon for past sin; to enrich us with all spiritual riches in Himself; to make us more than conquerors over sin, sorrow, suffering and death; to give us joy in the light of His countenance now and to bring us at last to the fulness and perfection of the highest, most glorious and perfect joy which will be associated with His person for evermore.

Jesus turned Himself about, "as if He did not know and would enquire who had touched Him; and He did this that the woman seeing

that she could not be concealed should betray herself, so that the miracle might be known not from the mouth of Him who wrought it, but by her who had received the benefit" (M). The Lord never published His own miracles by means of Himself, and sometimes even He charged others not to make them known. "See thou tell no man," was His injunction to the healed leper. After the manifestation of His glory on the mount of the Transfiguration His command was, "Tell the vision to no man." A beautiful lesson this to us, not to perform any corporal work of mercy, nor to do any deed of kindness or philanthropy "to be seen of men," never even to let our left hand know that act of charity which the right hand doeth. No good, holy, and kind deed, if unknown to man, is unknown to God: nor shall it in anywise lose its reward, "for your Father, which seeth in secret shall Himself reward you openly." Never forget that it is the motive which consecrates the action in the sight of God; the secret service is that which He loveth best. How many give their alms, their subscriptions, and the like, in order that men may see their good works, doing these unto men and not unto God. When this special miracle of healing was made

known, the Lord did not even then attribute it to Himself, but rather to the faith of the woman herself, which He brought before the bystanders relegating his own miraculous power carefully to the background.

Jesus turned Him about once more during the closing hours of His earthly life, and looked upon Peter (S. Luke xxii. 61) through an open lattice or doorway of the High Priest's house after the Apostle's third denial of that Master to whom he had boasted of his unfailing and strong allegiance, which turning and looking reminded the Apostle of his former professions, whilst "he, understanding the action, was moved to repentance, and wept bitterly" (A). The Lord's countenance revealed to the disciple in a moment of time, by His one glance, the threefold ray; of sorrow for the infirmity of our nature; of sympathy for his instant deep and heartfelt humiliation; of a love tender and deep beyond expression of words for his ardent follower. Brethren, to ourselves is Jesus ever turning, to infuse into our hearts a confidence of pardon for all the past, a good hope for the time to come, an assurance of grace to the faithful, and to change the sorrow of sin into the light and glory of holiness.

Jesus breathing on His disciples.

S. John xx. 22.—"He breathed on them."

OUR Blessed Lord breathed on His disciples on the evening of Easter Day, when He made His first post-resurrection appearance to them, having come into the chamber in which they were assembled through closed doors; thrice He blessed them with the blessing of peace, and afterwards "He breathed upon them."

He breathed on them; "giving the susceptive gift of the Holy Ghost, and so making them fit for His reception" (E). "He rendered them capable of receiving the Holy Ghost" (C). Why is that our prayers are often so cold, so lifeless, so unrefreshing? Is it not because before we pray, we are wanting in the Spirit of Prayer; because the grace of prayer has not prepared and warmed our souls so as to fit them for this spiritual exercise? So again our

worship in Church is but too often cold, formal, and wanting alike in fervour and in refreshment, and the reason of this is, that the susceptive grace of worship is wanting in our hearts. The main use of education lies not so much in the acquisition of that which is taught, as in its power of enabling the mind to receive, understand, and assimilate other branches of knowledge which bear more immediately upon the practical issues, and the after-concerns of our several lives and callings. If we profit not, the fault lies not in prayer, which may be both good, suitable, and excellent in itself; not the worship, be it ever so reverential, august, and solemn; not in the teaching as being in itself both solid and good; but in the want of this susceptive power which on this occasion our Lord bestowed so abundantly from henceforth upon those disciples which were assembled in the upper room. Due preparation is the key which unlocks the Treasury of faith, worship, knowledge, to the spiritual, moral, intellectual and active nature of man.

"*He breathed on them*," "and gave to them the Holy Ghost, not the perfect gift of the Father, for that was to be given on the day of Pentecost." (T). We may assume that this

inspiration was limited to the power of the keys, a special gift to the Priesthood. The recipients of the gift were the Apostles of the Lord. They were tried, good, and holy men, yet were they not entitled on that account to receive the full measure of the power of the Paraclete. God's gifts are often limited by the condition under which those labour who are yet worthy to receive a blessing from Him. Limitation of a divine gift is no sign of the displeasure of our Heavenly Father; it is regulated by Him, according to time, season, and the disposition of the recipient, in His infinite wisdom. In one sense this life, though eternal in its issue, is essentially one of small things; of feeble powers, of seeing through a glass darkly; yet it is very clear to Almighty God, and it is ordered by Him in the best possible way; His talents are distributed as best conduces to the working out of His own wise and beneficent ends. All God's gifts of grace are bestowed upon us in part now; that by our practical and earnest use of this part, we may be prepared and fitted for a fuller and larger participation of His grace when that which is in part now shall be bestowed upon us in all its fulness and perfection, when we shall

be received into the blessedness of His eternal Kingdom and glory.

He breathed on them. "As a king sends his officers with power to liberate from, or to cast into prison, so also His breathing invests the disciples with a like power;" (c) with a personal influence of strength both to do and to suffer—action and suffering are two watch-words of the spiritual life, which is ever active and ever striving to attain to higher things. But as the soul struggles upwards, it meets with many reverses, it encounters many a fall, and herein lies the secret of its suffering. Have you never felt the promptings of a new spirit within you, urging you onward to a greater sacrifice of self, to make an heroic effort to reach a higher and holier walk in life? If you have, you must have equally felt crippled for the moment under a sense of your own infirmity arising from the bondage of habit; from the seeming obstacles to progress which place themselves before you—have felt inclined to give up all further struggle and to fall back again into the old path of careless worldliness. Then, and not till then, you have felt a new breath to be breathed upon you as was breathed by the Lord upon these disciples on that

Resurrection evening, accompanied by a new sense of strength, causing the experience of the Apostles of old to become your experience now. "When I am weak, then I am strong." It was a soff breath that came from the lips of the Lord, but for all that it was a breathing, an influence of power and might The very world of nature breathes forth an inspiration of its own in which there is neither speech nor language, but the voice is heard, since the breath of nature exercises no small power over the sons of men.

He breathed on them. "By the bodily breathing and inspiration, He plainly signified a supernatural and eternal procession, by which the Holy Ghost proceeded from Himself" (D.C). It was an outward act which signified and conveyed a spiritual grace. It is so also the case in every outward act of devotion and worship. There is an outward sign under which there lies a hidden grace and efficacy: the bending of the knee; the bowing of the head; the making the sign of the Cross; the adoration paid to the blessed Eucharist, and the like, are not merely tokens, or expressions of reverential worship; but when rightly performed in sincerity and truth, they become the exponents,

not of doctrine only, but of that supernatural essence which can infuse a new vitality and reality into the whole of the inward man of the heart. The Lord could have spoken instead of breathing, but it was for instruction that He performed this bodily act, pointing out to us thereby the intimate tie which binds together matter and spirit. The truly reverential worshipper elicits fresh measures of divine grace from each and every act of devotion. The irreverential acts which characterizes the so-called worship of those without the communion of the visible Church of the Redeemer, are manifest tokens that the Lord is not honoured in such worship, and if the Lord be not worshipped therein, it must be destitute alike of power and acceptance with God.

He breathed on them. "The Spirit was given upon earth that man might be loved, it was given from heaven that God might be loved" (G G). This breath was a bond uniting the disciples by closer and more sacred and enduring ties to one another. It was a beginning of the communion of saints, for love is the bond of all communion; and this breathing was both a sign and a gift of love; one and the same breath for all assembled, making all

partakers of the one endowing gift. This act made a new bond of union between the disciples, for it was an inspiration which they all received in common. The assembly in this upper room, as time went on, would be scattered to the four winds of heaven, yet though divided in the body, they would still remain one—one in thought, in intention, in love, in devotion, in action, and in suffering; for "though separated indeed in life and work, yet still they would be wholly one in mind and spirit" (Cy). Strong and blessed is a united kingdom, equally so is a united household, so again is the faith of the Catholic Church rejoicing in one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Unity is a true expression of the love of Jesus who came to gather together in one all the nations which were scattered abroad. This breathing of the Lord, corresponded with His prayer for the servants of His Church "That they may be all one, as Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they may be also one in us" (S. John xvi. 21). As the Lord breathed the spirit of love and unity upon His household in the upper chamber, may He still breathe this spirit upon all our homes, our parishes, upon the Church and her several congregations, that

the same spirit which tends to the good and happiness of one, may be the abiding portion of us all, leading each one to prefer another before himself. Never forget, that love and unity in this imperfect state can alone be founded upon unselfishness and compromise; that some sacrifice is always to be made in order that we may be united with one another; some longing has to be subdued, some darling thought of self has to be cast away. It is only in a soul that is wholly emptied of all thought of self that the spirit of love and unity can dwell.

He breathed on them. "The over-flowing grace of the divine visitation and sweetness" (GO). The spiritual writers of the Church use this word sweetness (*dulcedo*) not in relation to taste alone, but as expressive of that which is soft, gentle, pleasant, like this breathing of the Lord, containing no compulsion but the bestowal of a gift, an endorsment being confessed by it of priceless value. After this sweet, soft, gentle breathing the Apostles became different men from that which they had been before; their spiritual nature was intensified and their life was raised by this new power which had now become their possession. So

gentle was the means used by the Lord to convey this precious gift that a lesson truly sublime is read to us by the manner of the giving thereof. Yes, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts." Sweetness in look, in act, in the smallest service rendered, as a mere breathing or influence exercises a sway that the boldest and sternest expressions of rebuke or command can never obtain; a breathing or influence sweet as the fabled soft song of the syren, like it—without any seeming command it captivates and subdues. In respect to this sweet influence from above, the simile from the poet is literally true; it being like the soft water which by its continual dropping, hollows out the hardest rock. Well might then the Apostle beseech his Corinthian converts "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." Never then may there be heard amongst us harsh, loud-sounding and clamorous words. It is the soft, gentle answer that turneth away wrath. As in the example of a holy life, so also in sweetness and gentleness is a power which none but the most reprobate can gainsay.

He breathed on them. "For the Lord who was renewing man, was giving back to him

that grace which he had received by the inspiration of God and which he had lost;" (BA), in order to quicken and intensify that new life which His apostles and others had gained from their intercourse with Him; in order to make them in some respects partakers of His own resurrection life. From all contact with others we become either better or worse, according as these others are either more spiritual or more worldly that ourselves. The breathing of Elijah upon the little child of the widow of Zarephath was a type of this. We each breathe upon one another by personal contact, an influence either for the better or the worse; it may be an unconscious influence which we exercise, but the influence is there, it is left behind when the giver of it hath departed. Take the case of social visitings, there are some that leave a sense of depression behind them when the visitor has departed. In conversation too, our very breath is either a blessing or a curse; a cause of joy or of disquietude if not of actual pain or grief. How do I nse my breath, my influence? A question this that each one should ask. The Lord's words were true of Himself as the Son of Man and Son of God. "I am come that men might

have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

He breathed on them, "but not with that breathing of the Holy Ghost, nor with that fire that came upon the disciples on the tenth day after the ascension of the Lord into heaven. This breathing was nothing else than air set in motion, just as your respiration is not a part of your soul." (HA). But still it was a divine breath, purifying their understandings and clearing their faith, and which like the invigorating breath of spring dissipates fog and vapour, and gives a new sense of joy to the reviving world of nature: it was strengthening and invigorating their hearts which were ready to die. It was because the faith of the disciples was so weak that they wrought so few miracles. When the breath of the Lord blew upon them it invested them with some new spiritual gifts; though not in all their fulness; because it increased their faith. To our poor failing selves, in our offices of devotion, in our prayer and praise; in our participation of the sacrament of the Altar, in short, wheresoever, and in what act we meet Jesus, then and there shall we become the recipients of His loving breath. Come then in worship

and sacrament to that place where Jesus is specially present, and upon yourselves as upon the men of old will the Lord breathe into your souls His loving Spirit.

He breathed on them. The act was momentary, but its effects were to last for ever, "for this breathing into and inspiration evidently signified a superintellectual and eternal possession or deep breathing." (D.C.) The gifts of divine grace can never be worn out or become useless or obsolete by time. It is worldly things which have their season and pass away and lose their very being in so doing; the effects of that breathing continued as it is by the mouth of His priests in absolution will last as long as His Church shall endure, and that, is unto the end of the world.

Jesus Led up.

S. Matthew iv. 1.—"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit," etc.

THIS leading up may rightly be called an act of Jesus, since "Christ willed to be tempted that He might furnish an example and a help to ourselves against temptations." (Aq)

Then was Jesus led up. "Behold how good and how beautiful was this counsel of the restoring Divinity, that after His manhood He should be led up into a desert, to fasting and to temptation, and not into a Paradise of pleasure, such as that in which the first Adam was placed. The devil took him into the holy city and placed him on a pinnacle of the temple, but he did not lead Him there. By the Holy Spirit He was led up into the desert, and when there, His own Spirit brought Him into conflict with the devil" (R). There was submission to God's Spirit first, and the

further action of His own Spirit to carry on the work. So is it with ourselves, when in our struggle against sin in our several conflicts in life; the Spirit of God carries us whither we would not go, and urges us onwards in the stern, hard, and often thankless path of duty; then at length He leaves us to our own resources, and to our own carrying on and working out of God's purposes in us, giving to us at last some gracious token, that now, through trial and discipline, we have become His true children. The christian life is one long continued course of our own spirit answering to God's, the Holy Ghost leading us and speaking to our souls. Hearken to Him and follow Him; Seek Him, "and your soul shall live."

Then was Jesus led up. "Why by the Holy Spirit? Because the humanity of Christ was the organ or instrument of His divinity, and therefore He was moved to do all things by the instinct of the Spirit. We then following the example of Christ should be led by the Holy Spirit, and not by the hypocrisy of the evil one, into a wilderness of solitude, but into the desert of our own breasts, into a place of contemplation; that in quietness, removed from the noise of the world, we may the better

fix our thoughts upon God, and that forsaking the world in heart, we may learn to hunger as if for the manna in the wilderness, for eternal joys alone" (L). A far different teaching to His, and wholly alien to it, is when the heart is led to live in, to love, and to sigh for "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" when it seeks to make a home of the desert, and the "City of God" becomes to it as if it were a region wholly alien to, and forgotten by our souls. On the other hand, the Spirit is ever ready and willing to lead us upwards, but when we refuse to follow His guiding, then He leaves us to our own devices. God's words uttered at the beginning of the world's history, stand good for all time, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

Then was Jesus led up. "We ought to know that the humanity of the Saviour possessed the Holy Spirit as if He were a master, not because the divinity which was united to Him was not sufficient, but that since He became incarnate by the good pleasure of the Father, so by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost the whole course of His life was worked out that it might be demonstrated that they were in themselves of the same nature, and therefore He was led"

(E). Even of our poor fallen human nature it is written, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God." This leading of the Spirit was a witness to His divine Sonship; such also, though in a lower degree, is the case with ourselves. As Jesus did, so should we also follow the leading of the blessed Spirit; follow it humbly, reverently, implicitly, faithfully and thankfully; follow it even as the Lord was guided by it into the solitariness of the wilderness; into hunger; into temptation, nay, even into persecution. "Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness." Make this your prayer, seeking ever to become obedient to the promptings of the Spirit.

Then was Jesus led up. "What a wonderful deed is this which was wrought by the Holy Spirit; for S. Matthew says that the Spirit led Him there; because for our instruction He did and suffered all things; and He allowed Himself to be led there, and to undergo the contest with the devil. Consider whither the Spirit led Him; not into the city, or into the forum, but into the wilderness." (C.) We may learn from this example of our Lord that "it is not in man that goeth to direct his steps," but that

he must be contented to be guided in all things by the all-wise, and all-loving providence of God. The ministry of the Lord was to be carried out amongst men and for men, and yet it began in a desert place and with a solitary conflict. The Divine Son resigned Himself to His Heavenly Father content to carry on His work in God's appointed way. God often appoints His work to be carried on by ourselves, not at all by the way and by the means which we should have selected for ourselves. The conditions imposed upon us by His providence would seem to hinder rather than to favour the purpose that we may have in hand; but unlike ourselves, God "knoweth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." Wheresoever God's providence may lead us, thither humbly and thankfully should we follow; He it is who either directly or indirectly putteth the means into our hands, the issue being left with Him. Faith is needed to realize the experience; "though He slay me yet will I put my trust in Him." Trustingly as to be daunted by no obstacles, discouraged by no failings, in the wilderness and the solitary place, as amid the crowded city He can be truly served.

Then was Jesus led up. "Afterwards our Lord, as if man, both did and suffered all things for the instruction of men; since He delivered up Himself after His baptism to the Holy Spirit, that He might be led withersoever He had bidden Him." (E.) This was an example of the highest form of the discipline of the will. It was for a time a complete subjugation of His divinity to the humanity which He had taken upon Himself for our sakes. Not I but God, not as mere expression of a doctrine, is the key note of the Temptation, but of a principle which He willed should continue throughout His entire earthly life. This was so because our Blessed Lord was the Wisdom as well as the Word of God. For a time He was as if He were only man, still being God, yet still as man wisely and unselfishly submitting Himself to the conditions of our humanity. How wise would it be for ourselves if conscious of our infirmities, of our want of knowledge, will, and purpose, of our weakness of principle, of our liability to fall, we could throw ourselves unreservedly upon God; feeling not my will, O Lord, but Thine be done. With the Lord there could have been no such conflict within Him as there was in the

case of Balaam, whose inclination and self-interest went one way, whilst both his knowledge and his fear of God were leading him wholly in an opposite direction. Yes! no man can serve two masters; as Son of Man followed implicitly the guiding of the Holy Spirit by whose inspiration He suffered Himself to be ruled. "Let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth in the paths of righteousness."

Then was Jesus led up. "Then, that is instantly, and without delay;" (L), implying immediate action; for in every crisis of life there is always a special time, and often only one for action. Delay is proverbially dangerous, nay in many cases it is not merely dangerous but fatal. The critical moment has come, neglect it, and the opportunity will have passed away for ever. Note the force of our Lord's words "agree with thine adversary quickly"; with speed. In like manner He addressed Judas Iscariot, "What thou doest do quickly." How many fall under temptation and are lost because they hesitate to reject at once the evil, and to receive the good. The crisis of life often hangs upon a moment, conviction touches the soul in a moment, act upon the conviction and the soul is saved, tamper with it, delay it,

and the crucial moment will have passed away for ever. The initial act of the Lord was followed up at once then, for "delay does not pertain to temptation," (G), since to hesitate is to be lost.

Then was Jesus led up. "That He might afford help to us against our temptations," (Aq.) since real and true help can alone flow from that experience which is purchased by toil, sorrow and suffering. The Apostle says: "In that He hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." It is only those who themselves have suffered that can fully enter into the sufferings of others. Trial of every kind is a kind of "refiner's fire" which extracts the pure metal from the dross. The prophet of sorrow becomes the great Teacher of consolation under affliction. That our Blessed Lord might, as Son of Man, the more readily help, He suffered truly for our sakes. All our experience is profitable for others both for instruction and for help. We are often led into perplexities and griefs that we may be able the more readily to minister to others when their season has drawn nigh unto them. Do we, as we ought to do, look upon our several crosses as a needful

discipline by means of which we may be enabled to alleviate the sorrows of another? It is the lesson which our Lord herein hath taught us; have we learned it lovingly, patiently, and it may be even thankfully, if so, happy are we.

Then was Jesus led up. "For our caution, that no one, howsoever holy he may be may deem himself to be secure and exempt from temptation" (Aq.) which under different guises and in various ways happens to us all. If temptation does not come in one way it often comes in another, when least expected and when the subject of it feels specially confident and secure; as a great Father has observed, "the temptations of the devil rage in our holy ones, since the victory over the saints is greatly desired by him" (H). We read "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." Therefore we ought to "be vigilant," ever watchful and cautious. As being Son of Man our Lord was led up to the temptation, just as we being sons of men only, are led up by God's providence to our several trials and temptations. May we learn our lesson of caution from the inspired admonition "let him that thinketh he standeth

take heed lest he fall," and from the sound advice of Jesus the son of Sirach, "My son, prepare thy soul for temptation."

Then was Jesus led up "That He might manifest what the will of God is in such as are possessed by the Spirit of God; so they in whom the Holy Spirit rules, are taken up by the contemplation of things heavenly" (D). Contemplation consists in the mind forming within it a certain mental image, not founded upon any kind of argument, but by intuition; when the mind runs as it were, hither and thither, freely, whither a certain spiritual inspiration may carry it. Another stage in contemplation is when we seek, find, and apply our reasoning faculties to those things which we have been "led up" to, by the higher Spirit. We use also in contemplation visible things as being signs of things invisible; as in the consecrated Host we spiritually discern the Body of the Lord. At other times the mind frees itself wholly from the imagination and the visions which it gathers together by reasoning it strengthens by the reason. Such are our concerns of our future state. Never forget that there is such a thing as a divine revelation to the soul which it irradiates by its divine

light. Lastly, all these unite in the soul, "which knows and considers those things which human reason alone condemns." (Hu.) Seeking to deepen the spiritual life, set apart, if a few moments only, a portion of each day to the contemplation of, or meditation upon the mysteries of grace. Remember, "that God never rests when He works; for when He is resting, He is working." (P.A.)

Then was Jesus led up; "because the Spirit, as soon as man has received it, does not permit him to remain idle, but He excites him to join fight with Himself as against the enemies" (Ap.) of his soul—the forms of the spirit by which Jesus was led up, are sevenfold. The spirit of fear, which leads the soul from falling at last into hell; when "fearfulness and trembling come upon" a man; and he escapes as it were at the eleventh hour. The spirit of wisdom, teaching us to "walk circumspectly not as fools but as wise." In sorrow and tribulation; when the cross is given to us to carry—for then the spirit of piety and compassion impossibly invites us to Himself; "All ye that pass by, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." The spirit of strength leads to the arduous life of the strict follower

of religion who is supported by feeling that "the Lord is the strength of my life." The spirit of counsel, leads men to penitence when they are bidden, "go show yourselves unto the priests. Man ought to be led also by the spirit of understanding to the consideration and treatment of sinners; "see thy way in the valley" of sinners, "and know what thou hast done." By the spirit of understanding, man ought to be led into heaven by the contemplation of heavenly things, as Moses led his sheep, his pure and holy thoughts to the back of the desert. Make we the prayer of a great thinker our own, our very own. "Lead me, O God, and do you, O Providence, guide me, that in whatsoever state I am placed by you, I may willingly follow your leading; but if, being sinful, I should resist your guidance, not the less, may I be forced to be led up whithersoever thou mayest take me." (Cle.)

Jesus dwelling in Capernaum.

S. Matthew iv. 13.—"He came and dwelt in Capernaum."

EVERY fact in and action of the Lord Jesus Christ has a spiritual significance which the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, looking behind the mere letter of the Gospel history, have sought to develope and explain for the edification of the faithful.

He dwelt in Capernaum; "or, as S. Luke tells us, 'He came down to Capernaum' both as an act of condescension and as a sign of humility; just as the act of going up is token of elation, or the loftiness of the proud" (Bo). In the choice of His home, as in all His other actions the deep humility of the Lord was shadowed forth. This humility began in His descent from the glory of Heaven into the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary; thence it passed into the manger of Bethlehem; thence to the workshop at Nazareth; thence down southwards to His lowly dwelling at Capernaum; then onwards

through toil and calumny to Gethsemane; hence, finally, to the Cross. Well might the Lord say, "I am meek and lowly in heart." This condescension of the Lord was consistently maintained during His earthly life, it never faltered or varied; it was manifested in all His actions, it extended to the depths of His entire human nature. Take we pattern then from the Lord's migration from Nazareth to Capernaum, of which He prophesied that it should be "brought down to hell;" of which its only remaining trace is now a mound of ruins, situated about the middle of the Western shore of the Lake of Gennesaret—to become like Himself, "poor in spirit;" since they who are poor in the proud spirit of this world are rich in the Spirit of God, and they are as valleys filled with the waters of comfort flowing off from the barren hills, with the living waters of His love, pardon, hope and joy.

He dwelt in Capernaum. "Behold the clemency of the Lord our Saviour! He was neither moved by indignation. nor offended by wickedness, nor violated by injury, therefore He forsakes not Judæa, and more than that, unmindful of injury, but mindful of gentleness and mercy, He appeased the hearts of an

unbelieving people; at one time instructing them, and at another time liberating them from sickness" (AM). Not for His own sake, but on behalf of the inhabitants of this place did He tarry in this, as also in other places, though for a shorter season, in this dwelling among the children of men. A portion of His blessed work of healing and restoration was to be done at Capernaum, therefore He came and dwelt there for a season. In like manner the providence of God orders our lives for us, and wheresoever He may place us, there He giveth the power to each one of us to do some good to others for His sake. It may not be at all the kind of work that we should have chosen for ourselves, or seemingly to be the most suited to ourcircumstances and dispositions; but it being God's work, ordered by Him, He will most surely open a way before us and furnish us with the means, be it time, influence, money or what not, by which we may be enabled to carry it through. God calls upon every baptized soul, in every place, to do something for the furthering of His kingdom. "O my Lord," cried Gideon, "wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold my family is poor in Manasseh and I am the least in my father's house." Yet

God enabled Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the hand of Midian. Saul felt the same misgivings when elected and anointed to the throne of Israel, yet he became a great king. We must take God's work both when and where it may please Him to put it into our hands and seek to carry His blessing in it which will surely make it prosper.

He dwelt in Capernaum; "leaving Nazareth that He might teach us 'not to cast ourselves rashly into dangers" (T). Not to court trials, but rather to yield and to withdraw from them. It is no ground of complaint that one does not bring himself into danger, but only that when being in danger, he does not carry himself boldly. "Teaching, therefore, this doctrine, and so appeasing the enemy of the Jews, He withdrew to Capernaum" (C). There both are, and have been a great many would be martyrs in the world, who oppose for the sake of evoking opposition against themselves; men who take a delight in posing themselves before the world as sufferers for conscience's sake. This is a common form of specious self deception of which in the present day the schismatical religionists of Wales afford a very notable example. They figure themselves as a body of men who

are ground down and robbed, because as yet they have not succeeded in wresting from the Church and using for their own profit, possessions which were never theirs; possessions which had been given to others. This is the favourite attitude of the Irish rebel and of the English trades unionists, since they, too, pose as sufferers whilst they are waging a war which has been and ever will be decided against them, a war which is destructive of all profit and progress—the war of labour against capital; which if carried out to its legitimate limit must end in the ruin alike of both the employers and the employed. The Lord in His infinite love and wisdom retired before the senseless and cruel opposition of the Jews at Nazareth, and in coming to Capernaum fulfilled the prediction of Isaiah concerning Him, "for He was Himself the great light that had arisen and shone, and they before Him ran forth to that light," so has written a Father of the Church.

He dwelt in Capernaum. "Which name signifies a very fair dwelling, or the field of fatness, or the house of consolation; and this dwelling here teaches us to pass over to the fruit of spiritual doctrine which is in the Gospel, that is to say in Holy Church, which

is a house that is very fair in its adornment of virtues; and is also a field of fertility in the opulence of works, and in the abundance of charity; and it is moreover a villa of consolation in the comfort of Holy Scripture; and in the hope of good things to come; since the Saviour by His doctors preaches the gospel therein daily. Well also is Capernaum called a maritime city, because as placed beside the sea of the world it is beaten by the waves of persecution; yet the Church does not cease to liberate by the waves of the gospel those who are submerged in the waves of pleasure' (B). Spiritually also Capernaum may be likened unto a human soul to which our Blessed Lord vouchsafes to grant His sweet renewing and helpful presence. "Wheresoever Jesus may enter all is changed for the better; the field of repentance becomes one of fertility, of joy and gladness, and the house or field of contrition becomes the house or field of consolation" (O). He, the Lord, is the one sanctifying guest Who makes all things new, in "the inner man," in the hearts of those in whom Christ dwells by faith. To gain and to retain this Presence is the end of all sacraments, and of all worship, of all prayer and praise; of our even struggle

against temptation and sin. May then Capernaum be spiritually represented in the souls of all who are here present at our worship, and who are living members of this our Church.

He dwelt in Capernaum that by the miracles and acts of mercy which He wrought therein, "He might teach in act that which He had before expressed at Nazareth." (o.) The Lord was not contented with preaching and teaching He must needs supplement these labours by deeds of love, power, and mercy. So is it with ourselves, words, mere sounds, will not save us; "Not every one that saith unto Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." The motto for the christian life should be "Not words, but deeds"; deeds which can be wrought in every place, and condition of life, if the heart be ready and inclined to do good it, may be in small things as well as in great, where the disposition is right, God ever gives an opportunity of turning this disposition to good effect. Our faith and trust in, and love to the Lord is never at a loss in finding an open door for its exercise.

He dwelt in Capernaum, "which fitly repre-

sents any kind of spiritual conversation, in which if a man rightly lives, he is able to find the consolation of eternal life." (Go.) And "true spiritual consolation consists in two things, in the adorning (by grace) of the natural powers of the mind, and in the quiet concord of the flesh with the spirit." (D.A.) Anything that tends to perfection brings comfort and consolation in its train. Sin, sorrow, suffering, sickness and the like are discordant elements, and banish consolation from the breast. "The consolation of eternal life signifies that consolation which flows from the hope of eternal life, and of something laid by, in store, kept at present in the background, but which will really afford an ample and full satisfaction for the trouble and vexation which is experienced in this present time and life."(Hu.) The Lord for a time made a home in Capernaum, in which He could meditate upon the past and see stretched out the glorious eternity of His redeemed church as in a panorama. Would that the remainder of our lives might be one continual dwelling in this spiritual Capernaum, reaping therein the sweets of consolation under all our troubles here, slowly but surely preparing for the eternal concord of

the flesh with the spirit, in the resurrection world of everlasting glory.

He dwelt at Capernaum; "that He might make a residence for His mother there, so that He would not have to take her about with Himself; hence when they had come to the marriage in Cana, the nuptials having been completed, He led her to His home at Capernaum" (T). Very many of our greatest and best men have been indebted for all that they afterwards became to the loving, watchful care and tenderness of their mothers; and however strongly the after ties of wife and family became, the holiest and most enduring was the love of the son for the mother. Our great Example set us a most beautiful example of filial love; His Father's work had to be done, but the mother was not to be left uncared for. New interests, occupations, infinite sorrows and labours had to be encountered, but before the busier and darker days of His trial life had set fully, "the Lord descended in Capernaum, that He might leave His mother to rest there" (E). In His own dark hours of conflict with sin and sinners, and the presage of His coming agony, turning His earthly horizon into blackest night, there was one bright spot in His work of expiation,

one ray of light reflected into His saddened soul; His vision of the most lovely, young, and sensitive one, of His own sweet, holy, Virgin mother; whom all generations shall call blessed, resting in peace for a season in a house in Capernaum. Sons, as many of you as may be present in this our act of worship, fail not at your peril to love and cherish her who gave you birth, who nurtured your infancy, who tended you in your childish years, who entered, as only a mother can enter, into the struggles, joys, and sorrows which mark the entrance into manhood of us all. The love of wife and children must never wax cold as time glides by, but the love to the mother is paramount; it should consist of mingled love and worship.

He dwelt in Capernaum "which art exalted unto heaven," possessing so great a privilege by my settling here, and by my signs and wonders (J). The earthly presence of the Lord carried blessings innumerable with it, whilst He sojourned amongst the children of men, in His, as yet unrisen manhood; how much greater and more powerful must be the spiritual blessings which He brings when He comes amongst us now—though hidden from our bodily sight—in His glorified — yet real

presence. Here, this very day, in this very church, where more than the two or three are gathered together not alone in His name, but to offer up the great and unbloody sacrifice of the new Law—is our blessed Lord with us according to His gracious promise "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." So Jesus is here; here in this church, and here now; and besides being in this church, if we be true and faithful communicants, He will be also present in our own souls. Do we think of this when our several Sundays and holy days come round? Do we realize the fact our church is a true Capernaum, a place in which Jesus dwells? God grant that we may do so, and then ponder not alone upon His infinite grace and the dignity of such a Presence, but upon the responsibilities which His Presence implies, how sincere, how pure, how loving, how humble ought our souls to be if we would ,,reserve this gracious Presence. "To this man," saith the Lord God, "I look, even to him that is of a poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth," through the consciousness of inward sin and unworthiness, "at my word."

He dwelt at Capernaum. "Himself and His

Mother came down to Capernaum, God descended to men; the Holy One to sinners" (R). He made a second home there; and only one such home was ever made by Him on earth; for the home at Nazareth belonged to His parents; and this one was only made once never to be made again. Ah me! we ask with saddened voice where now can such a home be found, and echo only answers where. It is hard to realize that the Son of God an of Mary ever had a home upon earth; that the Son of Man, who had no place in which to la y His holy head, could even, for so short a ti e possessed a home of His own; and even this was used for the carrying on of His missionary work; a brief resting-place for its beginnings. What kind of a home could it have been, this His house at Capernaum? A pure home, spiritually, morally and physically, in which no kind of licence would have been permitted, a home plain and simple, devoid of all grandeur and costliness; a home of the strictest frugality yet devoid of stint; a home peaceable and happy overshadowed by the gracious presence of the love of God. May all our homes be made conformable to the house at Capernaum, and carry within them the blessing of God.

Jesus Coming.

S. Matthew iii. 15.—"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee unto John."

"CHRIST came, that Him whom the Baptist had commended when absent, he might point out being present, as the day-star goes before and indicates the rising of the sun." (L.A). For the coming of Jesus was to a world darkened by doubt, hopelessness, sorrow and sin, the very rising upon it of the Sun of Righteousness when He arose "with healing in His wings." So may He be a sun to us, shining within our poor darkened souls, bringing to them a new and glorious sense of divine light, warmth, comfort, fertility, and stimulating us to a lasting and holy joy—filling our souls with hope and gladness, and placing them above the world.

Then cometh Jesus. "The Master comes to the servant; the Judge, as being one under the accusation of guilt." (C). The Lord's first

public act of His ministry was one of profound humility, of such a deep and true humility as filled the soul of S. John Baptist with awe and fear. Well might He say long afterwards, "learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye thall find rest unto your souls." What is humility? The highest of all Christian virtues, a most grateful offering to God, the key of knowledge, the very gate of heaven, the banner of Jesus, the glory of the Christian, the perfection of man, the nurturer of divine grace, and the guardian of the frnits of the Spirit. It has a mighty transforming power of its own, for out of love to fallen spirits, it maketh sons of God and heirs of His blessed kingdom The Lord was born in humility, lived, thought, did and suffered in humility, "Wherefore also hath God highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Think of its rewards, so many aud so sweet, of its riches so secure, of it honour and glory so undefiled, of its joy which wells up as a very spring of delight in the heart," (L.J).

Then cometh Jesus. "The Lord alone of the world comes through the distance of a long

journey. Consider Him diligently and devoutly so as to sympathise with Him earnestly in your hearts. He does not bring with Him a great company of soldiers or of knights, nor of any companions, for as yet He had neither disciples, nor any other following. No one went before Him to the inns to prepare things needful for His reception, nor was there with Him those honours and pomps which are so delightful to us to use. But He, to Whom in His kingdom thousands of thousands minister, and so many hundreds of thousands assist, "cometh" walking alone and pressing His sandalled feet, and labouring under fatigue, since His kingdom is not of this world, "Who emptied Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant," and that not of a king. He was made a servant in order that He might make us kings, He became a stranger and a pilgrim, that He might lead us to His kingdom. He placed before our eyes the way by means of which we could ascend thither. Wherefore do we neglect Him? Wherefore do we not humble ourselves? Why seek we so greedily, and hold on so firmly to honours and pomps both fading and vain? Why? Because our kingdom is of this world, neither do we con-

sider ourselves to be strangers and pilgrims, and so we incur these evils. O, foolish children of men! Why do we accept things false for those which are true; things frail for certain; things temporal for eternal; and why do we so studiously embrace them? Why do we not scorn these transitory things, and count them as though they had never been? Therefore the Lord Jesus "cometh," the giver and not the sender of salvation so humbly goeth He day after day until He gains the Jordan;" (L), thereby giving to us an example of a simplicity of life and action, to which we should all do well to conform our own lives. There was no standing upon dignity, no pomp or parade, for the Divine Worker as Son of man was wholly absorbed in His work. If each member of this congregation acted in such a spirit as this, what a power of unity, energy, heartiness and strength would these be in our services, what mighty and spiritual force in our whole parish.

Then cometh Jesus "as one of the people themselves, though higher than the heavens, to be baptised," (An.) as shewing to us that "in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." This coming was the

first great enunciation of His law of sympathy and compassion, which formed the keynote to His earthly life and ministry. The sinless Saviour identified Himself, by this coming with those who were born in sin, and who were children of wrath. "I have," He said on another occasion, "compassion on the multitude," compassion being a fellow suffering with any one; rejoicing with those who rejoice; weeping with those who weep. Sympathy destroys selfishness, expands the affections, enlarges our views of life, and binds men to each other as being all members of the great family of God. This coming was the beginning of a bond which was to unite all the great family of God into one universal brotherhood to the end of time; a proof that while the Lord was working for men, He worked with men; that whilst He worked for men, being God, He worked with them as the "Son of man." Do we work with and for one another as much as we ought? Do we "bear one another's burdens and so fulfil" not "the law" only, but the example "of Christ"? Do we perform the corporal works of mercy as we ought to do? Do we place ourselves in the position of those who are suffering, needy,

destitute and forsaken that we may be led to relieve them as far as it lies in our power so to do.

Then cometh Jesus. To a place, to a person, and to a sacrament. To a place on the banks of the Jordan, to Bethabara from Galilee, as we now come to a place, to the consecrated "house of God," which ought to be to all who come thither, that which it is to many, it may behoped, "the gate of heaven," to the place in which God is verily worshipped in spirit and in truth. Would that we reverenced our churches more; that we more liberally supported them; that we loved them better; that we visited them with a fuller and deeper spirit of veneration and devotion! To a person, as Jesus Christ came to John the Baptist, to God's priest and minister, by whom the ministry of reconciliation is carried on, and at whose mouth it behoveth the people to learn the wisdom that cometh down from above; to a sacrament the baptism of water, as babes at the beginning, and to the higher mystery of the stupendous Sacrifice of the new law. Plenty of water everywhere, but only one Jordan: many men but only one Baptist; many baptized, but only one Saviour; all of which things are an allegory.

Then cometh Jesus. "That by His own baptism He might commend the baptism of John" (J); teaching us by so doing that example is far before precept, both as to power and effect. It was one of the grave charges which the Lord brought against the Pharisees, that they bound upon men's shoulders heavy burdens which they themselves would not move with one of their fingers. The Lord did not say to others, go thou, and be baptized, but He came Himself to receive that sacrament from the hands of S. John, His forerunner. He in this as in other matters, left us an example that we should follow in His steps. An holy abbot once said, that he who teaches but does not set an example of that which he teaches, is like a well which both satiates and cleanses all who come to it, whilst itself remains uupurified and unsatisfied. "It is most dangerous to a man to deny by his deeds that which he teaches in words; therefore is he truly wise who teaches others by his deeds and not by his words only" (P.cl). Examples, says the Stagirite, move rather than words.

Then cometh Jesus; "that sanctifying the waters of the Jordan by the descent of the Dove, He might signify the advent of the Holy

Spirit in the laver of the believing" (J). The Lord had this power, and having it He used it as He did all His other powers, for the good of our lost and fallen race. Money hoarded up, power unused, grace wasted, education neglected and turned to no good account, opportunities thrown away are so many distinct signs of the devil's work. The Lord turned every attribute of His Godhead to its very best and sweetest use. Let not therefore any one power, gift, means or opportunity that you may have received from God be suffered to be idle, as the talent wrapped in the napkin, but rather, as the Apostle said (2 Tim. 6), stir it up, rekindle it, revive it, do not let it languish and die out for want of use. Remember that every power is given to be properly exercised, and to produce some certain and particular fruit; that not a single force in the world of nature is ever wasted or spent in vain; and much more ought this be so in the world of grace. Latent for a time the gift may lie dormant, but after its exercise it will prove to be like the bread cast upon the waters, and even if after many days of waiting, the fruit will be found at last.

Then cometh Jesus; "Who truly meek and humble in heart, considered that though He

was perfectly holy and free from sin, yet He had a body which was taken from the earth, which by submitting to the water, He aspired to raise—even our flesh which He had assumed to the likeness of the Creator of all things" (κ); that by His opening for us a fountain—even the lava of Holy Baptism—"for all sin an uncleanness," we might learn the lesson of having an unselfish love, thought, care and self sacrifice for others. This coming was a fitting beginning to His three years ministry of toil and self denial, to be crowned by His suffering the agony of the Cross. So, also, for ourselves, besides the baptism of water, there are other baptisms of suffering of which the Lord spake, "I have a baptism to be baptized with," the baptisms also of sorrow and disappointment. God ordains that we shall all come to one or more of these, that by so passing through them we may become purified here on earth, and so fitted for the kingdom of glory hereafter.

Then cometh Jesus, "not wishing to be cleansed, but to cleanse the waters, that they, purified by the flesh of Christ, Who knew not sin, and might be sanctified for those who should hereafter be baptized." (Am) So in this

advent of the Lord to the Jordan we are taught the twofold lesson of unselfishness and care for others. There was no present gain to Jesus, but countless souls to the world's end will enter into everlasting life through this simple action of the Divine Son. Every good action that we do to others carries with it an impact of holy force; it is an influence for good alike to the doer and the receiver; it brings a twofold blessing both to the doer and to the receiver. An intended action of goodness which may miscarry both as to the giver and receiver; yet leaves the doer or giver a gainer inasmuch as the mind, conscious of right, rejoices in the good intention.

Then cometh Jesus, "because He willed to do that which He commanded to be done by others; and this is what He Himself said; "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," (A.) This leading of the way it is which gives a supreme power to work; it is not merely a direction, but a manifestation. "Show me," writes S. James, "thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works,"—a strong expression of sarcasm and reproof. It was more than an example, being a correction and a stirring up of the conscience.

Then cometh Jesus, that no man might refuse the laver of grace, when Christ did not refuse the lavor of penitence"; (Am.) that no man might deem himself to be too good or full of dignity to receive with thankfulness the sacraments of the church. Do none of us patronise the house of God, by our presence there, and accept the ministration of God's priests as an act of condescension? How few use the means of grace in the spirit of the centurian; "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof."

Then cometh Jesus. "The Lord often came to the fore-runner. Wherefore? Either, that altogether as one of the many, He Himself might be baptised by John, lest any should imagine, that as if subject to sin, equally with those others He had been baptised; He came again to John, giving him an occasion for correcting this opinion" (T). This second coming of the Lord (S. John 1.29) to the Baptist was after His temptation in the wilderness, more than forty days after His baptism. The Lord gave us in so doing, an example of caution and circumspection. Inconsistency of conduct opens the door to many unfounded and unjust suspicions. We should act ever in such a

manner that our conduct cannot bring our Church principles into either doubt or ill-favour. By the laxity of faith and morals exhibited by many members of the Catholic Church the true glory and value and catholicity of her teaching is sorely misrepresented, if not wholly obscured. Wherefore cometh Jesus into our poor darkened and sin-ridden souls save to bring to them a sense of His blessing and delight; to give us pardon and absolution by the sacrnments of His Church; to guide our weak and failing footsteps by His divine grace to giory; and to help us in our every time of need. Make it a daily and hourly prayer, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, ere I die.

Jesus Sleeping.

S. Matthew. viii. 24. —"He was asleep."

"HE that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep"; for the eye of the Divine Nature is never closed, although "His eyelids try the children of men." His manhood might at times be weary, but the Godhead is ever looking down upon and beholding the children of men. Picture to yourselves the hidden Godhead in the sleeping Jesus on the Galilean sea; the storm; the fearful disciples; the prayer and its effect; their stricken consciences; and may God's Spirit bring these things home to all our hearts.

He was asleep. "He slept indeed that the disciples being stricken with fear might each know his own infirmity, and so might be led to pray to Him" (r) for succour. The best and holiest even are in danger of trusting too much to their own power, strength, and good-

ness, it is ever needful that again and again they should be reminded of their insufficiency and weakness. There ever exists a certain latent pride in the human heart, which after a long course of blessing and prosperity is but too apt to revive into life, and to be developed into dangerous proportions; hence it is that trial and adversity are so often meted out to the faithful, that through a sense of their own weakness, and a further sense of their entire dependence upon God, the unholy growth of pride may be restrained, and the lesson learned in the school of trial and suffering that all man's sufficiency is of God. S. Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was a counterpart to the fear that followed upon the Lord's sleeping during the "great tempest in the sea." Again, the water was rough, the sea was deep, the lake was wide and far spreading, and death seemed to be eminent. "We perish, we perish" was the cry, when a keen sense of their own mortality was forced upon the disciples. Whilst blessed with youth, with health, strength and prosperity—although we know that some day we must die—we put the thought of death away from us, as being something too terrible to think of. The heart whispers, my prospects

in life are so good, the sun of prosperity is shining so sweetly upon me, verily "it is a pleasant thing to behold the sun." It is well to be reminded ever and anon that "in the midst of life we are in death," that this world is not our home, our lasting home, since here we have no abiding city. The Lord was sleeping that the disciples might feel their mortality, and be led to cling to Him as their refuge and their life.

He was asleep. "The might of His Godlike sovereignty might be more manifest in calming the raging sea, and that the event might thus become a means of improvement to them that were sailing with Him, He purposely fell asleep" (C.J.). The Lord slept not because of His own need, but that by such sleeping His power, care, and love might be manifested to those who followed Him. In a sense, He sacrificed Himself for the good or the instruction of others. To fall asleep was no heroic act, no great deed to achieve, but it was done for a good end or purpose. By small and comparatively speaking by feeble actions, great truths may be taught, and the best of examples may be set; just as praise is perfected not alone by choirs, organs, and bands, but

"out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" It is the intention which consecrates the act, which itself is of trivial value.

He was asleep. "We sail over a certain sea in which winds and storms are never absent. Our sailing over the sea of this world is filled with dark temptations. But whence can this be so save that Jesus was sleeping? For if Jesus does not sleep in you, you will not suffer these temptations, rather you have an inward tranquility, Jesus is watching with you. But what is it for Jesus to sleep? It is that your faith, which is of Jesus, has slept. Storms arise on this lake, you see the wicked flourish and the like. Whence are you disturbed by waves and storms? Because Jesus sleeps; because your faith, which is of Jesus, is put to sleep in your heart" (A). Jesus sleeps then when our faith is sleeping, and when this is the case your faith is lost, as it were, for the time being, it becomes to you as if you had it not. The disciples lost their faith, although Jesus was present with them in the boat, and they lost it, moreover, just at that particular time in which it was most needful for them to possess it. If there be a weak point in us, in our bodily health, in our strength of character, in our

power of action; in our capacity of understanding, it always finds us out when there is greatest need that we should be strong. It was idle to the disciples that they could not realise the fact that Jesus was quite as able to save them when He was asleep as if He had been awake. Their very cry to Him for succour produced a rebuke; true, they gained their petition, but the very asking of it lowered their position with the Master; such a dormant faith as they possessed is powerless to ward off the attacks of fear and sorrow, since it is not at hand when its presence is most sorely needed. It was forgetful, too, of His past tokens of love and grace; the foundation was wanting upon which their strength ought to have been founded. Learn then, dear brethren, to keep ever Jesus awake in your souls, by confession of Him; by obedience to Him; by communion with Him; and carry Him with you as your companion Traveller over the stormy sea of this world's fitful life.

He was asleep. "It is a wonderful and stupendous fact, that He who never slumbered nor slept, is said to be asleep. He was sleeping indeed in the body, but He was keeping vigil in His deity, showing by this act

that He was bearing a human body; sleeping in this body that He might cause the Apostles to watch, lest also we ourselves should at any time sleep in the soul." (o.) In short, this sleeping of our Blessed Lord was a kind of parable in action. Had the Lord continued in sleep, the lives of all the disciples in the boat might have been lost, and if we sleep in our souls, we too shall be lost, when we are cast upon the sin-ridden billows of the world's tempestuous sea. The Apostles who were with the Lord in the boat had no dread or fear of sleep, as sleep, that is of its effects in itself. Had the storm not arisen, Jesus, as far as they were concerned, might have continued sleeping until the shore had been gained. But the sleep of the soul ever leads to death, hence the Apostle's exhortation, "Awake thou that sleepeth, and arise from the dead"; classing sleep with its twin brother death. "Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch, for they that sleep, sleep in the night"—of sin. "What meanest thou, O sleeper! Arise, call upon thy God." As the Lord sent the tempest on the lake, so doth He now send to our souls many tokens and providential signs for the awakening of our poor hearts; bright beams of the

sunlight of His divine grace, full of hope, joy, and comfort; storm, trouble, affliction, sorrow, unfulfilled desire, disappointment and distress, taxing every power of the soul, and, in this present trial-life, giving to it but small rest; and all this, in order that it may be preserved from that most awful and fearful sleep—the sleep of death. Awake, O soul, "in prudence, in understanding, and ask for salvation from the Lord; for He Himself who was sleeping in the body, spake of Himself that divine word, 'I sleep, but My heart awaketh.'" (o.)

He was asleep. For "the Churches in which the word of God is not kept awake have been shipwrecked; not because Christ hath been relaxed in sleep; but because He may have been lulled to sleep in us through our sleep" (H.). Yes, the Lord was asleep, not to Himself, but to His Apostles; it was their weak Faith, it was their cold love which was sleeping, so that to them the Lord was really asleep. Is not this very much the case in our own daily life? A person is not wholly that which he is in himself, but that which is to me. Is not Jesus, for example, present to some, and spiritually seen by some in the blessed sacrament of the altar, whilst to others He is wholly absent therein?

The former are spiritually awake; the latter are spiritually sleeping. Jesus is ever sleeping in the souls of the unworthy, the thoughtless, and the profane. What matters it to me, if Jesus be not awake to and for me, that He is awake restoring and blessing others whilst to me He is sleeping? He may be sleeping for a purpose that I know not of, but sleeping He is, when I ought to have kept Him awake. Had the disciples been conversing with Jesus He would not have fallen to sleep; the Church then truly would have poorer for all time, but the disciples would have been spared a sharp, though a deserved, rebuke. Truly man's infirmity furnishes God's opportunity; man's weakness reveals God's strength; just as man's sin opened in the veins of Jesus the fountain of the precious Blood for all sin, and all uncleanness.

He was asleep. "What does Jesus sleeping in the ship signify except that the succour of helping grace is withdrawn from the Church? Why so? That they who are approved might be made manifest? and that they who had been deceived by prosperity might be restored by adversity; that those who were living in sin might be purged, and that many Martyrs

might be crowned." (R). That which is true of the Church as a body, is equally true, of each member of the Church. Jesus sleeps when God permits some souls to fall into heresy "that they which are approved may be made manifest," that the contrast between truth and heresy may stand so boldly out that it may be known and seen of all men. Twilight is the middle state between darkness and light; we can get so used to twilight that it seems to answer our purpose almost as well as the perfect day. There is far too much of twilight in this world of ours; not of Faith only, but of principle also, of knowledge, and of purity as well. Jesus is sleeping in the soul, and the twilight darkens into the night, not of heresy alone but of actual sin. When the soul becomes fully awake, then the twilight, the shadows, and the darkness are dispelled, then does Jesus give us His light, and then the soul can truly say; "in thy light shall we see light." Sleep like twilight represents, as before observed, the middle state between life and death, just as lukewarmness is the middle state between heat and cold. Jesus is not wholly dead, He is only sleeping in such and such a soul; the soul becoming content that He should sleep there brings upon it that fearful renuncia-

tion "because thou art lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Let not then Jesus sleep in your souls, rouse them that they be in the light of grace and not in the darkness of condemnation, that they may become wholly "light in the Lord."

He was asleep. "He sleeps for us, who for us dies, for He would not have slept had He not meant His sleep to benefit us. The shepherd seems to sleep when the wolves rage against the sheep and when he who could deliver them is not present. So Jesus also, although He does not really sleep, yet seems to sleep, when tyrants rage, when the wolves, the wicked—rise up against the good, to overcome them; when in fact the wicked conquer. He does not sleep indeed, but He beholds the conflict, and looks forward to the end of the contest, and to the faith of those who are fighting. It is because He does not immediately help; does not come quickly to aid those who are struggling, that He is thought to be asleep" (E.E.). Oh! Faithful soul! Thou art ever under the eye of Jesus; in thy temptations, thy sorrows, thy conflicts, thy fallings and thy efforts to arise. "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid"; "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

Jesus Passing Through.

S. Luke xvii. 23.—"He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee."

JESUS CHRIST is a divine law to us of steadfastness of purpose, passing through as He did every phase, every experience, of toil and privation, until He had perfectly fulfilled the work which the Father had given Him to do. "My Work," he said, "is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work," so that just before His passion He could truly say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." He died. His sacred body is laid in the tomb; meanwhile His spirit passes to the spirits in prison, passing through another phase of labour. He rises from the dead, and during the great forty days between the Ascension and the Resurrection in further instructing and endowing His disciples with knowledge and grace to carry

on, by means of His Holy Church, the mighty work of love which He had begun.

He passed through. For "He was a pattern of progression." (A.P.) Hence we learn that progress is a law of His Kingdom. Here, on earth, we ought to be ever passing through from one stage to another of our spiritual life; and hereafter, through the continual and ever going on from strength to strength, from glory to glory. Let our advance in this life be ever so small, still there must be some advance; for in our present state to stand still is an impossibility. For if there be no progress there must be retrogation. The watchword of the Christian soul, both for time and eternity, must be "Onwards"—"not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect."

He passed through. "For He was going from mortality to immortality, from suffering to glory" (E.R.); going onwards, not through places only, but through many a varied and sad experience of life, teaching us the road by which perfection is to be gained. The "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief" passed through much, no man can tell how much, of sadness, sorrow, and disappointment. To this progression of His earthly life our Lord applied

another simile: "The cup which My Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" Is not the whole of every life but one continuous passing from the cradle to the grave, and but one long seeking after that which as yet hath not been obtained? Hence life hath ever been likened unto a journey, and the fresh experiences of each day's measure of life to the new objects which are met with in passing onwards from place to place. Let the life of anyone be ever so monotonous; the toil and its be ever the same, still the experience of to-day is not that of yesterday, and that of yesterday will not coincide with that which to-morrow will bring forth. Happy are those to whom the "days speak and the years bring wisdom"; and happy will it be with us if our daily lessons in toil, sorrow, and suffering, transform our lives into a very passing through and preparation for the better life to come.

He passed through. "That He might show the goodwill of the Samaritan" (T.B.); since in this, as in all the other actions of the Lord, there was a definite purpose, which was settled and distinct. He had an end in view; there was a goal ever before Him which could only be reached by a definite course of action.

Have we any clear and definite purpose in our own lives; or do we merely drift through time without either aim or object before us? This would seem indeed to be the case with many, who by their careless, thoughtless, frivolous waste of time proclaim that they toil upon the path of a life which is spent in so-called pleasure, being animated by the ignoble desire to kill the time. May each one present ask, even while these words are being spoken, "What is my purpose in life?" "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world," said the Divine Master of His life; would that we could say as much for our own lives. Seek then so live that the purpose of God in sending you into this world may be fulfilled in you, and by you, so that at the last your account may be rendered up with joy, and not with grief. May we all be spared the reproach of having lived this life in vain.

He passed through. "It was a passing onwards from earth to heaven" (E.R.): for His resting-place was not as yet gained. "This (world) is not your rest, because it is polluted" In the present life there is ever a something beyond; a something to happen to-morrow, next month, next year, or in some uncertain

future; there is an aim or endeavour which is not as yet perfected; a something beyond; a work which is still incomplete; more toil, more labour, ere the prize be won; the examination which is not yet passed, the fortune which is not yet gained, the building which is still uncompleted; the last touches are ever wanting, they are still to be added to the picture. Much discipline and purification is to be passed ere the reward comes. Alas! many a hill and valley lies between ourselves and the City of God. Live we then, like the Lord; seeking grace to endure unto the end.

He passed through. "There was no delay in His journey, since we draw nigh daily toward that place whither we hasten" (E.E). There is no tarrying or resting on the path of life, since none can stay the flight of time, and the law of progress is a continuous one. We cannot, even if we would, close either our eyes or our hearts to the thoughts, feelings, occupations, and the like, that each successive day brings with it; the ministry of life is carried on every day either for good or for evil, leaving its mark and its impression behind it. At the end of each succeeding day we are, whether we know it

or do not acknowledge it, somewhat different from that which we were at its beginning—better or worse—nearer Heaven or nearer Hell, and this not only by the positive action of our thoughts and deeds in themselves, but by their reflex action too upon ourselves, since all things have a twofold an esoteric or inward one, and an exoteric or outward, which imparts to them their power and energy, the moral of the whole being expressed by the "*carpe diem*," the seizing the opportunity of the poet.

He passed through. "He was walking from place to place that he might be present with all" (E.R); since His resting-place was not as yet gained. Of this life it is said: "This is not your rest," for during its continuance there ever exists a something beyond; an aim or endeavour which is not as yet perfected; a work which remains still incomplete. We must look to bear more and labour; the examination is not yet passed; the fortune is not yet gained; the building is not finished; the last touches have ever to be added to the picture. We may have yet to pass through much discipline and purification; the heavenly Canaan may loom in the distance; but it is as a land which is very far off; many a hill

and valley lies between it and ourselves. Meanwhile may we have grace to walk along our path of life, being strengthened on our way by a faith and hope which are both filled with immortality.

He passed through. "By a local walking" (E.R)., not riding, either on a mule or in a chariot. going on foot, a slow and tedious way of travelling, to express to us that the progress in all things of moment or of value must of necessity be slow and gradual. The growth of the highest and best products in the world is a very slow one, the acquisition of grace and knowledge is carried on by processes which cannot be hastened. The mushroom, like the gourd of Jonah, springs up in a night, whilst all great and valuable results take a very long time to mature. All this holds good also in the spiritual life, in which there is a blade of promise, an ear of progress, and then the fruit of Christian perfection. There are many periods when our best strength is proved by our "sitting still." We require steam and electricity to rapidly convey us in luxurious carriages from place to place, but the Lord of life and glory was content to travel on foot the rough and dangerous highway of this world's wilderness.

He passed through. Still going on, not being worn out or weary, since progress ever brings with it contentment and joy of heart, which enable the body to bear much toil without fatigue. Idleness is the parent of weariness. The indwelling Godhead of the Lord, coupled with the extreme earnestness of his soul in the work which He had willingly undertaken and which the Father at his own request had given him to do, sustained him, as Son of Man, in the doing of it until the end. The inward spirit can cause the body, weak and frail as it is, to carry out and sustain to the end many an arduous and glorious work by the supernatural power of its grace and earnestness. "I can do all things," says the Apostle, "through Christ, who strengtheneth me." A promise had also been given: "as thy need so shall thy strength be." In progress there is a sustaining power which continually urges on the soul to new endeavours, pressing it forward to new victories, especially those over self, sorrow, and sin. The retrospect of that which has been rightly achieved urges us onwards with a joyful and hopeful spirit to the undertaking of greater and higher deeds. The toils and difficulties of beginnings vanish in

proportion to the advances made. In the holy life, the higher the ascent which is gained, the brighter and more invigorating doth the path become, for "the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The past grows more dim; the future grows more bright; and the sense of the weariness of the way fades as the end of the toil and the journey draws nigh.

He passed through. "That is, through a middle path, that of grace, which consists of a middle or mean; one that neither declines to the right hand by excess, nor to the left hand by defect; that teaching all how to advance to a state of glory and perfection when he said: "I walk in the way of righteousness in the midst of the paths of judgment, that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures;" that is, "let me embrace goodness and edify the righteous, for these love the earnest, that they may be delighted with His good treasure" (A.N.). Hence this passing through of Jesus gave a lesson in the spiritual life, such as may be considered to be a treasure to the holy soul, and to delight it as being such. Our Blessed Lord came to be to us "the way," as well as the

truth and the life; the middle way, the *via media*, is the way in which we should strive to walk, and so striving, "thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying: 'this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left.'"

He passed through, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left; "for the theological virtues, not in themselves, but by their accidents in relation to ourselves, seem to consist in a middle way" (Aq.). It is not so in their relations to God, since He alone is their measure and rule; our faith being regulated by His truth; our love by His goodness; our hope by the greatness of His omnipotence and compassion; and in these things we cannot, by any possibility, come up to His measure and standard. But consider these things in themselves, and the case becomes altogether different; for what is faith but a mean between blind credulity and unbelief? What is charity but a mean between idolatry and indifference? What is hope but a mean between presumption and desperation, or between assurance and despair? So also in all our various vicissitudes we have to pass through the mean and not to turn aside to things either too high or too low for us to

follow after them. Let the prayer of Agur be to us an instruction by which we may order or modify our views concerning God's gifts and providential dealings with us. "Give me neither poverty nor riches" but a middle path that will bring me through a state of discipline onwards to my heavenly home.

He passed through. "For this journey of the Lord was typical of His transition from the regions of earth to heaven. He was passing through mortality to immortality; from punishment to glory; from contempt to a Kingdom" (E.R.). He was going to Jerusalem, in which was the Temple of the Lord; the priesthood of the Jews; the worship of the holy religion; this City of God, this vision of peace was the end and aim of His journey. Sequence of thought suggests the questions: whither does my journey of life tend, and in what habitation shall I find my rest when my travelling days are done? Ere we can attain this end we must pass through and out of Samaria, *i.e.*, the prison in which we are bound by the chains of our sins—the snare must be broken and we must escape; through the midst of Galilee also—from all that is rotatory, shifting and unstable; pass ever onwards, "through the midst of traps and

allurements, straight forwards till we gain the true Jerusalem, the eternal vision of peace" (A.P.) arriving at which "all transmigration being ended and the custody of every sense being preserved, the pressure sustained in ever-changing world removed" (A.N.), the redeemed and glorified soul will enter into its eternal rest.

Jesus Following.

S. Matthew ix. 19.—"Jesus followed him."

THE disposition and character of a man can often be more truly learned from comparatively speaking small and trivial words and actions, from the trifling incidents of the common daily life, than from many a greater word or deed which may mark a crisis in a life. It is the insignificant floating straw which accurately points out the direction in which the current is flowing. The mere fact that our Blessed Lord followed Jairus might seem at first sight to be one of small significance; yet, when duly considered, it gives no little insight into the lovely and immaculate heart of Jesus. Jairus was one of the several Doctors, called rulers or chiefs of the synagogue, at Capernaum; one of those whose duty it was to read the prophesies, to recite the phylacteries, and to

pass before the Ark. This Jairus besought the Lord, who instantly responded to his request, that He would come and lay His hand upon his daughter, who was even then dead.

Jesus followed him. "When the Lord was asked by Jairus that He would come to the restoration, or the raising up again, of his daughter, He did not delay, but rising immediately He followed him; by which example He taught us that we ought to be quick and ready in our performance of any work for God" (c.). How many an opportunity, how many graces, how many inspirations of God the Holy Ghost, are lost by a careless hesitancy; or by an undue delay. Directly the "angel troubled the waters," the infirm man, if he wished to be healed, had to step into the pool of Bethesda. The critical moment passes by, the inspiration dies out; the resolution waxes cold and faint, whilst the opportunity is lost for ever. There is an old proverb that "he who giveth quickly giveth twice." Thousands, aye, tens of thousands, of souls are lost year by year through that great emissary of Satan—procrastination—so rightly said to be the thief of time. Readiness and alacrity were practically taught by the example of the Lord. Readiness is a certain

sign of earnestness; whilst earnestness is in itself an expression of feeling which proves the heart to be in the right place. As an example then to the faithful for all time, "the Lord instantly rose up and accompanied the ruler" (D.).

Jesus followed him, and "He left an example, of obedience" (R.). He being obedient to his request, Jairus being "a ruler of the synagogue." On the other hand, disobedience was the ruin of the first man, the bitter fruit of which has to be eaten by man whilst the world shall last. Obedience—ever commended by God—is much blessed by God, because in it we readily offer to Him our very own selves. Be it remembered, that obedience is in itself an act of the will, and the act of doing proceeds from the will itself, for the will is the mainspring of all action, "since it moves all the powers of the mind by its own action" (Aq.); wherefore Jesus was obedient to the request of Jairus, because He willed so to be. There is also something very sacred about obedience; "it was the only law that God gave to Adam in Paradise, as the sign of His rule, providence, and blessing; hence the severe penalty with which his disobedience was visited" (HO.).

Obedience also contains the germs of all perfection, since it prepares the soul to receive the other gifts and graces of God the Holy Ghost. It is the ground and foundation of all knowledge, since the Lord hath said: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." Obedience is the one great law of God's kingdom; it should reign over the body as well as over the soul; it applies to earth as well as to heaven. The disobedient will be cast into hell, there to abide under an eternal and forced subjection.

Jesus followed him, and by so doing furnished to us "an example of infinite compassion" (A.P.). It demands great power to condescend to great sorrow, as Jesus ever did; "it is the attribute by which the omnipotence of our Lord was manifested" (Aq.); since it belongs by right to the mighty and the prosperous to feel for the sorrowful, the suffering, and the poor. The compassion of our Blessed Lord was infinite in its extent; no condition of need was excluded from this exercise of His love: the greater the distress, the firmer was the hold that it had upon His loving pity; it was also very deep in purpose; it was no mere superficial sympathy, for "He knew what was in man," therefore did

His compassionate mercy probe man's misery to its very depth. "Having regard to the devotion of the father" (G.) of the damsel, He rose up to follow him then and there; and this "was in the way of mercy" (E.E.) that He went with him. Jairus spoke: He waited not to ponder upon his words of supplication, He weighed not his merit, but He entered not only theoretically, but actively into his distress, since His compassion in this, as in every other case that came before Him, was eminently practical. This also is required of ourselves, that we demonstrate our sympathy in action, that we suffer not our pity to begin and end in mere words, but that we compel it to pass onwards into deeds. In this particular instance, the Lord appears to have spoken nothing, for St. Mark writes: "Jesus went with him"; St. Luke merely stating the fact—"as He went." All are ready to acknowledge that profession without practice is of neither value nor avail. Let then your motto be "not words, but deeds," for then your compassion will bring a blessing with it.

Jesus followed him. "O, wonderful humility! The King of Angels follows the ruler of the synagogue. Thou followest Jairus; but who

followest Thee, Thou Son of God" (A.P.). He, the Alpha, the first, was contented to be the Omega, the last. The great example followed an example. "Humility is the banner of Jesus, just as pride is the standard of the anti-Christ, or rather of the devil, who is his head; since he who fell through pride in the beginning, reigns over the children of pride." (Gu.) "Humility is spoken of in the scriptures as a virtue, since the Saviour Himself said: 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.'" (O.) The true value of grace and humility is that it regulates and restrains the soul, lest it should immoderately aspire to things too high for it. It is hard to our poor human nature to bridle aspiration; but there is nothing too high or too mighty to belong as of nature, and of right, to the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore for Him to be humble must have been, not merely a hardship, but an agony. He, the all-powerful, curbed His power; He, the all-glorious, concealed His majesty under the lowly form of the Son of Mary. "Now, there are seven grades of humility, to all of which we ought to strive to attain—to know ourselves to be mean and unworthy; to grieve over this fact; not to be ashamed to confess it: 'I am a worm and no man,' but dust

and ashes; to really desire others to believe this of us; to bear it patiently when so spoken of by others; to suffer scorn and contumely, to even love undeserved contempt." (An.) "Humility leads to the gate of heaven; it is the key of knowledge; it is the perfection of man; it is the glory of Christians; the slayer of sin; it is the safeguard of salvation; it is the ornament of faith; it is the breastplate of our King." (Cl.) Therefore saith the Master, "learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Jesus followed him, adapting Himself to the circumstances of the case just as He did at Sychar, where, "being wearied, He sat down upon the well, resting and cooling his body. What, is this 'thus'? (S. John iv. 6). Not upon a throne, not upon a head-cushion, but simply on the ground" (Am., P. & C.), accommodating Himself to things as they were, and not vainly regretting that they were otherwise. Fully did He carry out this principle in every incident of His earthly life, as a careful reading of the Holy Gospels will abundantly testify. If one may so say with due reverence to the Divine Lord, there was never with Him a case of the square man seeking to be fitted into the round hole; for His

each word and deed was exactly suitable to the circumstances which called it forth; He argued or He retired; He rebuked or He consoled; He approved or He discouraged; He hid Himself or He came forward to suffer; being guided in in all cases by His divine wisdom or by His loving heart. Hereby He afforded to us many lessons for the due regulation of our own conduct in life. To all and to each of ourselves life is a kind of compromise; a condition of being in which it behoves us both to give and receive. In married or domestic life, this law of mutual fitting in; of adaptation; of compromise and exchange; in matters in which no vital principle is at stake, is the only course by which the current of our daily life can be so preserved as to run on in a smooth course. The Lord might have preferred to stay for a time in the house of S. Matthew, where he was being hospitably entertained; in which too, He was reproving the Pharisees, and at the same time instructing the disciples of S. John Baptist; but His presence being sorely needed elsewhere, He at once conformed to circumstances; He arose and followed Jairus; elsewhere there was good to done, and so He went away and did it.

Jesus followed him. He had a definite pur-

pose or intention in so doing. "Intention is the eye of the soul; if it be good its every operation will be full of light. It is often not so much what a man does, but the nature of his intention in so acting. Hence, the Lord said of almsgiving, fasting, and the like, when done for vanity, that it should have its reward'" (E.E.), "Cain and Phineas were both homicides, one urged by envy, the other by zeal for the glory of God;" (A.S.) the one was cursed whilst the other was blessed. How very many, alas, are all their lives long wholly wanting in any definite intention to control either thought, or action; they are content to drift down the stream of time to very gates of Hades. Intention is an act of the will which moves all the powers of the mind to a certain end. Just as we see by the eye how to direct the body, so intention presupposes a certain knowledge which it presents to the will for use for a definite end" (Aq.). The Lord willed to go to the ruler's house, because the intention was present with Him to restore his daughter to life. When the great moralist said that "hell was paved with good intentions," he only told us one-half a great truth; for surely heaven is also paved with the same, the difference between

the two cases being, that in the former they simply remained as mere intentions, and nothing more, but in the latter they had been carried out into action. In any case a good motive or intention is ever better than a bad one. Seek we then to follow the Lord, as He followed Jairus; to have a right intention in all things, and pray for the help of divine grace to bring this intention to a good effect.

Jesus Hiding.

S. John viii. 59—"Jesus hid Himself."

NOT as if He were a mortal man like ourselves. He could have stricken those cruel, proud, bigoted Jews with blindness or with death; the power so to do lay in His own hands; but the time of showing forth His power had not yet come, and other work remained with Himself to be done. Note how wonderfully He held Himself under discipline; how marvellous was His self-control; neither anger nor heat of temper was ever shown by Him during his ministry, they were never allowed to have any play. This hiding of Himself was a mighty act of self-discipline; one that all should seriously lay to heart. The Lord considered not Himself: with Him His work was all in all. He sunk himself, so to speak, in it, so that He could truly say of it at the last, "It is finished."

Jesus hid Himself. "He hides Himself after a human fashion, and He hides Himself when

He has laid down to them sufficient teaching, having fulfilled His mission"; (c.), that particular mission, at that time, and in that place. He neither desired vengeance upon His enemies, nor death for Himself. He remained amongst the infuriated Jews till He had taught them that which He willed to teach them. He bided their anger, and for their own sakes prevented them from proceeding to extremities with Him. Further argument and further violence were alike dispensed with. He was gone, but He left the seed of His words behind Him. The teacher had miraculously disappeared; but the sound of His words had found its way into their ears, and it had touched their consciences; alas, for their sakes, not in love, but in anger. We, too, may have spoken the word in season, and have had to go away; but the word hath been left behind us, though it may have been received with either carelessness or scorn: in some case, thank God, to become like the seed cast upon the waters, to bring forth fruit after many days. We are all taught by this action to bend for a time to opposition, and to leave results in the hand of God.

Jesus hid Himself. "Not as passing the Jews, in a corner of the temple; nor fleeing into one

of the little chambers of the temple; nor turning away behind a wall or a column, but by a heavenly power rendering Himself invisible to their snares, 'going through the midst of them, and so passed by'" (A.). From this hiding we learn that, even before His resurrection, our Lord was capable of assuming an invisible presence. He had an invisible presence then, an invisible presence before, thenceforth and for ever. To the disciples going to Emmaus, this invisible presence was revealed in the breaking of bread. The human body of the Lord was never wholly subject to our own bodily conditions of form and space. Let us trace out a few circumstances of this real but invisible presence. What does He Himself say about it: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." With these His words sounding in our ears, can we, dare we, limit the conditions under which Jesus may be present with us, though we see Him not with our bodily eyes, or handle him with our bodily hands? Is Jesus absent from the consecrated bread? Then it is not His body. Is He absent from the consecrated wine? Then it is not His blood, His real though spiritual blood. Again, the Lord, when

on earth conversing with Nicodemus, spoke of Himself as "the Son of Man, which is in heaven." Therefore it can be said truly that the Lord hides Himself in bread; that he hides Himself in wine; that He hides Himself in another degree, it may be, in worship. If indeed His natural body before His glorification could render itself invisible, how should not His resurrection body be subject to a like mighty and marvellous change? All this is a great mystery, but, nevertheless, it is one upon which the entire sacramental doctrine of the Church is founded. "This is my Body" said the Lord at the institution of the blessed sacrament of the altar, no mere symbol, or form, or likeness of it, but the very Body itself, its ousia or substance, its being. Seek we then in thought, in word, in deed, to gain and to retain this loving and divine presence in our souls; to consecrate our every thought, word and deed to Him; being ever mindful of the fact that it was to spare Himself then, that He might suffer for us afterwards, that on this occasion "Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple."

Jesus hid Himself. "God, not fearing, but overlooking, when He hides from the sinner,

spares him. God does not wish to slay the rebel when he departs from him" (P.C.). This hiding was an act of divine power, used not in anger but in mercy, since it preserved those Jews who were in the temple with Him from having or taking the blood of Jesus on their souls. They willed to become murderers, but the Lord saved them from incurring this guilt. By Himself, they themselves were saved from themselves. Is it not so with ourselves also, if we neglect our opportunities for obtaining the grace of God: shirk, shorten, or wholly neglect our prayers at home; forsake our church; absent ourselves from the blessed sacrament, fail in our several duties of life at home or abroad, and the like, does not God often hide or remove these several opportunities from us, taking them away from us, not in anger but in mercy, that when our final account has to be taken, it may not press so hardly upon us; that there may not be so many accusations to rise up against us before the judgment seat at the last great day.

Jesus hid Himself. "What did the Lord signify by so doing; save that the truth itself is hidden to those who refuse to follow His words" (G.). This hiding of our Lord, con-

sidered in a spiritual sense, is a gradual one. Private prayer is shortened and hurried over, and finally neglected; public worship and the services of the Church soon lose their efficacy and sweetness; for the soul hath withdrawn from Jesus, and He at length hath hidden Himself from it, and stopped its supply of spiritual food. So devotion becomes quenched; faith hath waxed cold; the sacramental means of grace are cast off; a godless heathen life is entered upon to be followed by a godless and a hopeles death-bed. There was a time either in early life, or it may be not so long ago, when Jesus was nigh unto that soul; when its love to Him was strong; when it hope and trust in Him were clear and bright; then there came, through temptations unresisted, through evil companions delighted in, or through the workings of unhindered sin, the stones of doubt, or of actual unbelief; the stones of bad sensual thoughts; the stones of an ever-increasing love of the world, and one by one the soul threw them as it were at Jesus. Despite all this He still pleaded by His spirit for repentance and softening of heart; for a return to old ways of holiness; but the pleading was in vain, and so from that poor soul the Lord departed. May the grace of God

preserve us all from such a falling away as this; from such an infinite loss; from such a hopeless state.

Jesus hid Himself. "When the Lord had said to His persecutors seeking Him: 'I am He,' their pride was all abased, and they were stretched prone upon the ground. He Who therefore could have avoided the hands of these men stoning Him, without hiding Himself, why did He now hide Himself, unless it was to teach us that He speaks sometimes by word, and other times by example. What does this example say to us, save that although we may be able to resist, we should rather turn humbly away from the anger of the proud" (B.). Our Blessed Lord carried with Him, as Son of Man, the perfect humility of conscious strength, whilst, on the other hand, our humility is far oftener but a confession of the humility of weakness. If the "soft answer turneth away wrath," silence may be even of greater avail than any answer at all. To conceal our feelings when we are unjustly attacked, may be taken as some sign that the grace of God is dwelling in our hearts. "When anyone may be unjustly reviling you," said a great thinker of old, "comfort thyself with the thought that, had

he known you more thoroughly, his language would have been far more severe" (E.P.). "Answer not a fool," nor a false accuser, "according to his folly." We cannot, like our Blessed Lord, render our bodies invisible; we cannot hide them from the attacks of our enemies; but on due and proper occasions we can all hide our hearts and feelings, and by so doing cut off all further opportunity for false, or harsh, accusation. The Lord has taught to bend like the reed, to the storm.

Jesus hid Himself. "So His life is hidden to the evil and the wicked; blessed therefore are the Christians to whom alone is life revealed. 'Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God'" (E.E.). We may read a book, hear a sermon or a lecture, listen to the sublimest strains of music, behold sights the most wonderful; and all will be in vain and profitless to us, if there be nothing in common between these things and our souls, our sympathies, our understandings, and our knowledge. All these things may be read, heard, seen, and the rest; but all to no purpose; they are hidden from us, in fact, and all the reading, hearing, and seeing, will avail us not one jot or tittle. Wherein lies the defect? Not the things them-

selves, but in ourselves, surely; seeing, we do not perceive; hearing, we do not understand. Our Blessed Lord, as to His divine nature, was just as much unseen by the Jews when He was present with them in the body, as when He hid His flesh from them. Cannot this thought be brought home and applied to the temple of our souls? He is here, here in the sacrament of His love upon the altar, here in His worship, and in His word, but we see Him not; not from want of faith alone does He remain unrevealed to us, but from our want of holiness, from our need of spiritual understanding, from our want of love to Him. He is here, in this church, yet to how many of those who are present is He wholly and absolutely absent; we are not refreshed by His presence. Yea, truly! He is here; but does He warm our hearts, does He kindle our affections? Does His presence with an earnest longing for the higher and better life? We are here! and we can criticise the Church, the services, the priests, the ministering clergy, but all the while Jesus hath hidden Himself from us. We gain no warmth from His love; no peace from his pardon and absolution; no glimpse of the heavenly life; no longing to behold the King in His beauty; no ardent de-

sire to migrate to that divine land which is "afar off." Are we really Christians? Has Jesus, indeed, hidden Himself from us, wholly, utterly, and gone out from this His temple in which we have flung the stones at Him of carelessness, contempt, coldness, and inattention? God save us from this.

Jesus hid Himself; "having made Himself invisible by his divine power to those who were plotting against Him" (Th.) Lest the same punishment should fall upon our souls as that which fell upon the bodies of the Jews, we must endeavour to honour, love, and obey the teaching of the Lord, that instead of hiding Himself from us He may reveal Himself more and more to us every day that we live; in every act of worship, whether in private or in public, which we may offer to Him; that with a clearer eye and a brighter faith He, the true sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings, may shine with warmer beams and a brighter light into our cold, darkened, and sin-stricken hearts; not hiding but revealing Himself more and more to us as our course of life is being passed through by us. Oh! more and more may Thy person, Thy love, Thy power, be present with us, O Jesu Christ.

Jesus Sitting Down.

Luke 2: 46

THINKING over the stupendous mystery of the Incarnation; of the Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord; of His mighty power over both the worlds, natural and spiritual; over His present mediatorial throne in glory; over His second coming in power and great glory, and the like, it must be somewhat refreshing to the Christian soul to contemplate His purely human acts—to look at Him, for a while, as Son of man, and to listen to the teaching of the holy fathers and doctors of the Church upon what may be called, with all reverence—the minor acts of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us on this occasion consider some aspects of his earthly session.

He sat down; "sitting down in the midst of the doctors (S. Luke ii. 46), since this sitting down implies quietness and humility" (Bo.), the quiet spirit "is in the sight of God of great

price"; it is agitated by no undue emotion; it is disturbed by no contentions from without; it is an assurance of a firm faith; it is an expression of the concentrated energy and spiritual feeling; it gives its possessor confidence to hold on firmly to conviction; to support an argument; to obtain the victory. So the God-child sat still; the doctors might rave, gesticulate and contradict—but still waters run deep, and their chief power lies in their very depth. The subtleties of the learned, profound, and aged doctors were confounded by the quiet outpouring of divine wisdom which flowed from the lips of the Divine Child. We too can hear and answer; and we can ask and hear, and hold our own against all disputants attacking the faith; if our hearts sit down, that is, if void of agitation, passion and bitterness, we hold our own in quietness of soul. Many a good cause and right argument is lost through the weakness engendered by flurry and agitation. "The possession of a quiet spirit makes the soul rich for eternity" (An.), and gives, moreover, a certain strength to it, for, says the prophet "in quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isai. xxx. 15). Humility likewise, in discussion and argument, disarms an opponent; and opens

his heart to the reception of the truth ; it leaves at the very last nothing personal to be opposed. Our Blessed Lord at twelve years of age, in His very childhood, has taught us how, and in what spirit, it behoves us to support and contend for the "faith once delivered to the saints," when it may be attacked in our presence by the worldly and the profane. His session in the Temple becomes to us an example not lightly to be esteemed "Solomon, young and tender, sat upon his throne that he might teach wisdom 'Behold a greater than Solomon is here,'" (An.)

He sat down. "Sitting in the midst of the doctors, Himself the Doctor of the little ones; the Teacher of the Gentiles, and a 'Master in Israel,' in order that He might pour out His doctrine as prophecy." (An.) The Lord communicated knowledge by hearing and asking questions, that is, by catechetical teaching, which is a most valuable, exhaustive, and effective method of instruction, since it draws out and defines the hidden knowledge of those being taught; it stimulates and exercises the mind of the teacher; it impresses the subject matter upon both alike; it mitigates the distance between the one and the other; it preserves the attention from wandering away from

the matter in hand. The more catechetical instruction is used, the less will be the labour employed both in its communication and its reception. The greatest uninspired teacher of antiquity—Plato—conveyed to others his vast stores of moral and intellectual truth by conversation, and by dialogue. Much of the later teaching of our Lord was conveyed by His direct interrogation of His accusers and murmurers. This sitting in the temple indicates also to us that knowledge, like all other of God's gifts, time, money, influence, and the like, is given to us to be diligently used for the benefit of others; which benefit also acts directly and indirectly upon ourselves, just as we grow richer by almsgiving and become wiser by teaching. The conversations carried on in the Sunday School and the Parish Room, short though they may be, and not always abounding in logic, often do far more good than the careless listening to many sermons can effect. So the sitting of our Lord in the Temple gives to the Church both a lesson and an example, which will hold good for all time. Cultivate, therefore, enlarge, and systematically carry on catechetical instruction in connection with the particular church to which you belong.

He sat down. "Sitting upon an ass" (S. Matt. xxi. 5.) "Not for any other use or reason, but He might fulfil a prophecy (Zech. ix. 9)" (T.), which was a part of the work which His Heavenly Father had given Him to do, and by the doing of which He proved Himself to be the true Messiah. Nothing was left undone by our Blessed Lord of that work which ought to have been done by Him; in the doing of which He shrank from nothing, but accepted misrepresentation, humiliation, persecution, suffering, and death. Thoroughness was the distinguishing characteristic of His work. This prophecy had been uttered concerning our Lord, therefore did He accomplish it to the very letter: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. ix. 10). Let the work be great or small; let the self-denial and self-sacrifice be great or small, leave no portion of it undone that it may be in your power to accomplish. The Lord, our Master and Example, put self wholly aside; we, His unworthy followers as we are, should strain our every nerve in order to follow His example. Bad, alas! is our best, but our most earnest prayer, care, toil and labour should be spent upon that special and particular work

which God, in His gracious providence, has given us to do. A half-hearted service is little better than no service at all; it brings no satisfaction with it, no peace of mind, no approval of the conscience. Whatsoever we do, should be done as to the all-searching, and all-judging eye of Almighty God Himself, and being so done, it will bring its own particular blessing with it; and in all sincerity we can then pray for further strength, and that it may turn to good effect. "Lord, prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper Thou our handiwork."

He sat down "and taught the people out of the ship" (St. Luke v. 3), "sitting down as if using the authority of a teacher" (L), since "He taught as one having authority"; being above the prophets, for they said 'Thus saith the Lord' but Christ spoke as God 'I say unto you'"; (T.). The Lord derived His authority from His divinity; we derive our authority from the holiness and consistency of our life and character, and conversation; our social, moral, and spiritual power over others flows from our worthiness for its reception. The Christian parent gains a true authority over his children by winning their respect, and

then they become the recipients of his teaching. True and real authority cannot be usurped; it must flow from within, and not from without. The bad parent may be obeyed from fear, but the wise and good father or teacher wins a far deeper authority through love.

He sat down, "after reading a passage from Isaiah (lxi. 1) that we may believe an establishing and true Word to be derived from His mouth, yea and what is more, the Word of Truth itself" (An). He sat as a judge giving sentence upon the judgment-seat. Is it thus, brethren, that we read and hear read the divine words of the Blessed Saviour? Do they pass sentence upon our thoughts, words and deeds? Become they to us a savour of life, or of death? What is their power and influence upon our lives, and upon our conversation? Should our hearts condemn us not in this matter, then, and only then, can we have "confidence towards God." They must convey to our souls a message either of life or of death. There is not, there cannot be any neutrality in them. To you, through the grace of God, may Jesus even now be speaking, and saying unto your souls: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

He sat down "and the twelve apostles with him" (St. Luke xxii. 14), "that He might give entire redemption to His people, and offer Himself wholly for each one of them. Never before had He communicated Himself wholly and eminently given all things with Himself, save in this most happy hour, in which he changed the wine into His own blood, and the bread into His body" (M), since the Holy Eucharist is of all things, the fullest communication of Christ to our souls. "We say that Christ first ate the Passover standing and afterwards reclining He delivered His own sacrament. The first Eucharist was in itself a great mystery, and it differs from all other Eucharists, not in substance or in power, but in circumstance. In it the Lord Himself was both priest and sacrifice. He was the institutor of the real, just as the Paschal lamb was a representation of His the true sacrifice. The communication of this sacrifice was restricted to the members of the sacred or apostolic college; it, like the lamb, was offered by the Lamb of God in the evening. The lamb was eaten standing, as about to pass away, but this sacrifice of the new law was eaten sitting, or rather reclining, to signify that it was to endure. After our Lord's resurrection,

during the great forty days, He instructed His disciples who were Apostles, as to many points concerning the order and ritual of His church of the New Covenant, and these very instructions form the foundation upon which are based the Eucharistic "rites and ceremonies of the Church;" they having descended to us from the days of the Apostles themselves; hence the body of all Church tradition is Jesus Christ, and "this man"—God, Redeemer, Prophet, High-Priest, and King—"hath" done and ever could do "nothing amiss." On the contrary everything was done by Him for a purpose, wise, good, and beneficial, for "He hath done all things well" —therefore He sat down.

Jesus Going into the House.

S. Luke xiv. 1.—"He went into the house of one of the Chief Pharisees."

THE plain mention of this simple act of our Blessed Lord, affords a clear illustration of the four significations which we ought to discover in every passage of Holy Scripture which we read. The first, the historical or *literal* meaning; the plain signification according to the letter is, that the Lord, as any other invited man might do, simply enters into a certain house. The second, or *allegorical* sense, was used by S. Paul (Gal. iv. 24.) when he allegorizes Ishmael and Isaac. So allegorically did our Lord come into the Pharisaical house of this world to eat the bread of obedience to His heavenly Father's will. The *tropological* or *moral* sense follows, morally teaching us, that

without any thought for self we should be ready to go anywhere where good is to be done. The *anagogical*, spiritual, or mystical sense points to the eternal house of heaven. "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." Using this method of reading Holy Scripture, you will find that you possess four Bibles instead of one: whilst the mental effort required impresses Holy Scripture vividly on the mind.

He went into the house, etc.; "although He knew the malice of the Pharisees, yet He became the guest of them, that He might do good to those who might be present both by words and miracles" (C.A.); showing that good is not to be done to the good and the deserving only, but to all men, that they might become better. Because these Pharisees were self-righteous, unbelieving, and malicious, they were not to be shunned by Him who had the power to both enlighten and instruct, so, too, heretics and schismatics are not to be delivered over to perdition, but are to be rescued by the arm of the Church, and to be directed to the true and the more excellent way.

He went into the house, etc., to teach us *earnestness of purpose in every work that we may take in hand.* "It is meet to be supposed that the

Lord went into the house, as having been invited to the feast by its giver; since he would not have gone to the house of any of the Pharisees unless he had been asked so to do, and as 'He knew what was in man' He knew that He had not been invited out of devotion, but rather out of malice" (L.), nevertheless He went there, for it afforded a notable opportunity of doing good. The invitation coming from such a source was little else than an insult to His person; it was a trap artfully designed to bring confusion on Himself yet He went, for He thought not of Himself, but for the sake of His work, and for that of His heavenly Father. This was the purport of His earthly mission; a mission carried on so unfailingly, so unflinchingly to the end; so that when this end drew near, He could say in truth: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"; and again: "Of them which Thou gavest Me I have lost none." His intense earnestness of purpose carried our Lord through all his toil, privation, contradiction, and suffering. This earnestness of purpose is a great and blessed gift; it is a mighty power; it breaks through all barriers; it is stayed by no obstacles; it is daunted by no rebuffs; it is

the mainspring and secret of all real and great work in the world ; it implies the carrying out under all its disadvantages of the wise man's advice, "Whatsoever thou findest in thy hand to do, do it with all thy might." May God give to us His grace, so to rule our own poor lives, that at the last great day we may render our account with joy, and not with fear, and so may be accounted worthy to attain unto the resurrection of the just.

He went into the house, etc. ; "not because He affected the feasts prepared by a mortal hand, but that He might teach salvation and search for the faith" (E.R.); that He might rescue one soul, willing to accept the faith ; so setting forth the value of small gains to the Church and Kingdom of Jesus. During the converse of the bread-eating in this house, a word, a seed of the living truth might be dropped into any heart willing to receive it; that a drop of fertilising and refreshing dew might fall upon one poor soul. The Lord preached to thousands ; He ate bread in the Pharisee's house, perchance to gain one soul. Despise not the day of small things ; for remember : "He which converted the sinner—the single sinner—shall save a soul

from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

He went into the house, etc.; "that they who were unable to follow Him into the cities, towns and wildernesses, might hear His teaching, and seeing His miracles might believe on Him and be saved" (H.A.). This bread-eating in the house of the Pharisee occupied a certain portion of one day in His ordinary ministerial work, which not interrupted thereby to teach us that *God can be served in the ordinary course of our common daily life.* Our lives are a loan to us from God; He appoints them, and if we ask Him, He will give us grace to faithfully fulfil our several duties and responsibilities, if we ask for it humbly, and seek to use it faithfully to His honour and glory. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This command clearly proves that God can be glorified in this our ordinary life, despite its shortcomings, its cares, its responsibilities, its joys, and its sorrows. "The Trivial round, the common task, would furnish all we ought to ask; room to deny ourselves, a road to bring us daily nearer God." Elijah found Elisha ploughing with his

oxen when he cast upon him his prophetic mantle. The house of the Pharisee was not scorned by our Lord as being an interruption, a waste of time, as a breaking into his special missionary work. Such as are ever in a hurry, and who complain of having no time for this or that thing, are verily not the workers, but the idle, the weak and the unprofitable. There was no waste of time in our Lord partaking of this meal; and there is, saith the wise man, a time and a season for all the work to be done under the sun.

He went into the house, etc. "The care of souls was a concern to Him, therefore he entered in" (T.), that we might learn thereby that *the work of God can be done in many different ways*, and by various means; by prayer, fasting, almsgiving, worship, solitude, and the like; or by action, as Martha did it; by stillness and contemplation, as in the case of Mary. The hand of the Lord is not shortened so as to allow us to serve Him in only one way. Varied is His work and varied are the instruments by which He works; varied is the chain of circumstances by which His work is carried on. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect to an holy day, or of the Sabbath

day." "For in all things God can be glorified in us by Christ Jesus." Hence it follows, that everyone is without excuse who does not work for God, and are not doing their several duties as to and for God; as working in His sight.

He went into the house, etc., as being our great example, to lead us to understand that *opportunity is never wanting to serve God for such as care to avail themselves of it.* This is an old proverb, that where there is a will there is also a way. Now, we are but too apt not to find a way for the fulfilment of a duty which is irksome to us, whilst we can find the means of doing something, which is far more difficult for us to do, if it ministers to some pleasure; in which case we grudge neither toil nor anxiety. This eating of bread with the Pharisee must have been most distasteful to the Lord—but God was to be served by His so doing; and therefore "He went into the house." Infinite are the opportunities which are given to each one of doing some service, be it great or little, yet they are passed by without any thought or concern, because God is not in our thoughts. The cry of St. Paul holds good both for his time and for ours: "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

Place then, God's work before your own. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things," which you desire and need, "shall be added unto you."

He went into the house, etc., "to teach us that *the feast of the Spirit is not opposed to the feast of the body if it be accompanied with thanksgiving*" (An.); "for," says the Apostle, "if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that which I give thanks." As the Sunday is a day of spiritual, so ought it to be also a day of bodily, refreshment. Hence on Sunday the Church relaxes her rule of the Lenten fast; for Sunday is ever to be considered as the twofold festival of soul and body. The carnal, Judaizing spirit of the Puritan of past days was never more clearly seen than in his conversion of the Lord's festival into a day of fasting and humiliation; this was indeed a return from the Gospel to the Law; from the spirit which giveth life to the letter which killeth. May God in His mercy preserve us from a like declension for the future, and may we in loving thankfulness on these our Sundays receive this twofold food, which God, through our Blessed Lord, has furnished to us for our use.

He went into the house, etc., furnishing us with

a lesson of social life and manners; that we all as members of one family, and of the household of God, are not to be united in the gloom of despair; in a sorrow which is without hope; in sin beyond the range of pardon; but that we should be united in Him, the elder Brother of our race, the giver of life, joy, pardon and grace here, and of glory hereafter; of Him who promised: "if any man open the door, I will come into Him, and will sup with him, and He with Me." Even so, come to us, O Lord Jesus.

Jesus Departing.

St. Matthew iv. 12 – "He Departed."

THE ministerial life of our Blessed Lord upon earth was essentially a missionary one, and as such it consisted of a perpetual change of place. But beyond this natural going and coming, the great fathers and doctors of the Church have traced a higher and a more spiritual purpose in each and in every one of His migrations; associating a certain and particular feature and intention with each removal. They have lifted up the vail—so to speak—here and there, and by so doing have revealed some of the salient features of His hidden life; each of which is fraught with some special lesson of spiritual import. We now read that. "*He departed*" from the mount of temptation into Galilee "*teaching us that we should not rashly cast ourselves into dangers*" (T). The

rash exposure to danger is no mark of real courage, it is mere foolhardiness. The Lord was very courageous; alone, and unprotected, he flinched not to denounce the "scribes, pharisees, and hyprocites" in their very presence. At first when He was brought before the tribunal He would not even answer Caiaphas, and when He spoke at last He boldly vindicated the glory and majesty of his second coming. He was absolutely silent when brought before Pontius Pilate, treating his questions with a calm determined contempt; yet when the Jews would have stoned Him "He hid Himself and went out of the temple." He scorned the notion of posing Himself as a persecuted suffering martyr, but when the time of His passion drew nigh, then, "He suffered because He willed it" and "as a lamb before his shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." His example bids us to be staunch to the backbone, and to remain firm as a rock when a question of principle is involved; and at the same time not to court opposition; if possible, to avoid danger, but when it really comes, to be brave, to quit ourselves like men, and to be strong. Stand fast in the faith, be firm, be bold but avoid rashness, and flee from

persecution for religion, which may be prevented. The Protestants did this during the Marian epoch, whilst the Catholics avoided it as far as possible under the reign of the vain hearted Elizabeth; and they did this not from cowardice, for they knew how to die well for their faith; but as following their Lord's example of "bearing," "departing," "going out," and the like; yet the number of the deaths for the old faith of the Church, far exceeded those who perished for the new religion, or the "reformed faith."

He departed from the synagogue at Capernaum. When they sought to cast Him down from the brow of the hill, "He, passing through the midst of them, went His way" (St. Luke iv. 30). "He rendered Himself invisible to them, and He was seen afterwards upon the brow of the hill"; (Cai.) and so he saved the men of Capernaum from becoming in fact His murderers. His blood was not to rest upon their heads. God often in His mercy deals so with such as do despite to the spirit of His grace; He withdraws Jesus from their souls, He removes them from His Church and her privileges, He throws them into a state of bodily or mental weakness, so that the means of

grace so liberally bestowed, so carelessly and indifferently used, are taken away lest at last their continual bestowal should lead to a greater condemnation of the soul, and should subject it to the many, instead of the few, stripes. It was the loss to the men of Capernaum, that the teaching of Jesus was taken from them. The worst stage of all in the condition of the body is when the physician says that neither his medicine nor his skill can be of any avail. The case is hopeless indeed when the great Physician of souls departs from His patients; giving them up as being beyond His power to cure.

He departed, etc., as being invisible, and so teaching us that under the lowly form of the Son of Man, as at His transfiguration "He was endowed with impassibility, agility, subtility, and brightness" (Aq); the last attribute being unlike the three former ones dependent upon action, but inherent in His nature, to be concealed or revealed at His pleasure. This departure in an invisible presence teaches us two lessons, for firstly it became a showing to the disciples, and to ourselves as well, of that which our own resurrection bodies will be in their state of final glory, when we shall be

"fashioned like unto His glorious body"; and this act, which taught the Church for all time the lesson of hope and expectation, when once learned has proved itself to be of inestimable comfort to all such as feel that their "outward man" is decaying; and how soon, how very soon, the sentient body will be turned to nothingness and corruption. Secondly, it should teach us not to judge by the mere outward appearance, as those men of Capernaum did; they would have ridiculed the notion of the Godhead being concealed under the lowly form of the Son of Man, just as the heretics of all ages fail to recognise under the consecrated elements of the Sacrament of the Altar, the very, and true, and real Body, and Blood of Him, Who for our sakes was immolated upon the Altar of the Cross.

He departed, etc. (St. Matt. xv. 21) and "He left the Scribes and Pharisees who were ever wishing to censure Him" (C.D.); going from Gennesaret to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Our Blessed Lord never forced His teaching upon any man; those receiving it He both instructed and enlightened, and to such they were "gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth"; but he left those who either rejected or

cavilled at it to their own devices, giving them over to their own infinite loss. So is it now, the Church can but teach the doctrines of Jesus, and if men refuse to hear the Church, they become as heathen men; they place themselves beyond the appointed sphere of grace, being aliens from the commonwealth of God. Men are not to be forced into the Church, life and death are plainly set before them, and if they reject life and choose death, the loss and punishment falls upon themselves, and not upon the priests of God. The priests can but try and persuade to accept "the truth as it is in Jesus," and then their teaching function ends; they "declare the whole counsel of God," and the Spirit of God must be sought for by each one that this counsel may come home with power to the heart.

He departed, "and went into a desert place" (St. Luke iv. 42) after healing "Simon's wife's mother" of a great fever, and many sick of their divers diseases. He had to "preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also," "and therefore it was but natural that He should leave Capernaum; but over and above the ordinary course of things, there was a certain spiritual significance in our Blessed Lord's

every action. In this special case, "after sufficient profit had been conferred upon the people by these miracles, it behoved the Lord to depart, *since after His departure the miracles, from the absence of their worker, would be more highly esteemed;* whilst they themselves more fully call aloud, and exercise a voice of their own" (c.). The Lord left His miracles to speak for themselves, and so to testify of His power and love. We, too, should let our light —our deeds, our daily life—"so shine before men that they may see" our good works, and so may glorify our Father Who is in heaven. When He was gone from them, the people could calmly think over all that had been amongst them, and then new, better, and holier thoughts of the doer Himself would by degrees fill their souls. The sweet influence of a holy life lasts far longer than the life itself. Reaching down in many cases to succeeding generations, it becomes in very sooth an heir-loom of Godliness. Neither goodness nor evil perish with the life; the after effect of it is, perhaps, its most serious responsibility.

He departed, "and went into a desert place," "humbly wishing rather to hide Himself than boldly to show Himself, according to the prophecy: 'Lo, then would get me away far

off; and remain in the wilderness'" (Bo.). In our Blessed Lord the highest power was united to the deepest humility. He was in this, as in other respects, the "Pattern Man." It may be said that, as a rule, really great minds are humble. Some folk with very poor and limited thought and understanding have the faculty of performing some great material work, and such persons are often boastful, vain, and immoral, whilst the well-disciplined, earnest, Christian soul, conscious alike of its own strength and its own weakness, is ever diffident, is ever humble—it has fully accepted the teaching of the Divine Master: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." The Lord departed to read to us a lesson of humility.

He departed, "and did hide Himself from them (St. John xii., 36). "He went away, not from those who had begun to believe in and to love Him; not from those who had come to meet Him with palm-branches and praises; but from those who both saw Him and envied Him" (B.); who hated His person, despised His teaching; from those who would have none of His reproof; from such as would not take up the Cross and follow Him; from the worldly and the hard-hearted. From our own

hearts doth He now depart, when our prayers are cold, our worship formal; our souls worldly, and our lives sinful. Oh! the loss which follows upon His departure. In His blessed presence, within the soul, we have all things, whilst without it, we are indeed desolate and forsaken in this present life, and we are wanting in all that hope of future glory that is able to sanctify this life, and to make the bed of death an open door to glory, honour, immortality, everlasting life.

He departed from Genesareth, into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, which signifies spiritually "the going out of the penitent soul from the vanity of the world" (A.P.); teaching us that as the Lord departed from unworthy persons, so ought our minds to forsake unworthy things; greed of gain; unholy pleasures; ambitious desires; the several temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The penitent soul has to depart from its old delights, associations, and occupations; and to follow the example of our Divine Master and Redeemer. Listen! the Prophet is speaking; note his exhortation: "Arise," ye then, O Christian Soul, "and depart, for this is not your rest"; and why is it not? "because it is polluted." May God give to all His grace so to do!

Jesus Silent.

St. Matthew xxvii., 12—"He answered nothing."

THE Blessed Lord had been brought before Annas, who was either the President of the Sanhedrim, or who held some very high place in it; and afterwards He was led away to Caiaphas, who was the High Priest that year. As the Jews had no power "to put any one to death," the Lord was taken to the Fortress of Antonia, which was the official residence of Pontius Pilate, the Governor, before which there was a large paved court (*Gabbatha*, signifying high or elevated), from which a flight of steps led up to the Prætorium," or "Hall of Judgment," whither Jesus was led, the Hall being crowded with Roman soldiers and officials, with whom, on account of its being a feast day, the Jews could not intermingle; so Pilate took his seat on the Tribunal of Justice, under the portico at the top of the steps, and he then proceeded to the final examination of the Lord. Pilate held in his hands the sole power of life and death, and this the Lord

knew full well; and moreover he was not evilly disposed towards this wonderful and august prisoner. The priests were insolent in their reply to Pilate's questioning, but when they accused the Lord before him, He made no reply. He condescended not, to offer before them any excuse, "He answered nothing," at which "the Governor marvelled greatly"; and on yielding to their impious petition, expressed his conviction of the holiness of his prisoner in the words: "I am innocent of the blood of this *just* person." Pilate, hardened heathen as he was, was deeply affected by the power expressed in the Lord Jesus being silent. Silence is sometimes stronger than words.

He answered nothing; "Nothing," said a Gnomic poet, "is more profitable than silence; it contains in itself an answer to many; being often stronger than speech; for unless something better than silence can be spoken, it is better to be silent." Such is the opinion of a wise man of old.

He answered nothing. "Wonderful is silence, since it hath the power to produce so great results; He was silent, being judged, who, when He shall come to judge all at the end of the world, will by His one terrible and audible voice instantly raise all the dead. The

President marvelled that Christ should be silent, and that He should not, by defending Himself, condemn His informers; that he should seem so negligent of Himself, in Whom was a mind that carried itself so high, as if it were not of this world, and yet was despising the judgments of men; and wholly is the Word believed to be divine, since it did not reply to the human word; for the Incarnate Word, assuming the other nature, did not fall away from its own" (s.c.) Pilate wondered at the human Word which he saw, and which answered him not; how much more would he have marvelled had he been able to recognise the Divine Word which was hidden from his vision. One lesson for us to learn from this fact, is not to judge too hastily and carelessly from outward appearances. We are prone to judge a man by the garments and the like, which he may wear. At a glance we can discern that which is outward, but the hidden man of the heart very often lies concealed from the outward gaze. Pilate saw the poor persecuted Jew, but little did he deem that He was "the Son of God with power"; the Redeemer of the world; the Judge of quick and dead, to become, by "the power of His resurrection" the firstfruits of all who shall have lived and died from the beginning of the world

to the end of time; that it was the Lord of life and glory who now stood awaiting death before him.

He answered nothing; "For He knew that the tribunal would not promote the truth" (T.); that the judgment would be an unjust one; that all He could have said would have been spoken in vain. The Lord therefore became, as the prophet had expressed it, "like a lamb which is dumb before its shearers." So He, the Wisdom of God, "Who hath been made unto us wisdom," proved His wisdom by silence when standing before Pilate. Learn we then, from His example, that there are times and occasions when it is far better to remain silent than to speak. How often do words magnify injustice, kindle bitterness, and degrade the speaker? Remember, there is a record kept of every idle word, and in cases where right and reason are excluded, silence is infinitely to be preferred to speech; it is then a sign of strength, and not of weakness.

He answered nothing. "He willed so to do, lest, refuting the accusation, He should be acquitted by the judge, and the benefits of the cross should be deferred" (J.). This very silence was a tacit evidence of His abounding, enduring and unselfish love. Jesus had power

over His own life, but He willed to lay it down for us men and our salvation. The silence of the Lord was the most perfect expression possible of His self-sacrifice for our sakes. So it was that silence formed part of the great economy of the incarnation, in which He was to suffer without a trace of sin or wrongdoing, and to bear the suffering all patiently. Just so was it when "the Jews taking up stones to cast at Him," "Jesus hid Himself and went out of the Temple." He could have smitten them with death; He could have received their stones without hurt; He hid Himself rather than do either of these things, verifying what St. Paul felt afterwards when he said, "When I am weak then am I strong" (2 Cor. xii. 10). Fixity of purpose, when God gives to us the strength of mind to maintain it, is a mark of the grace of God dwelling within us. As Jesus loved, so also did He "endure unto the end."

He answered nothing. "For He deemed it superfluous to make any reply to Pilate, since Pilate was not able to restrain the people" (E.Z.) "Answer not," said Solomon, "a fool according to his folly"; "cast not" said "a greater than Solomon," "your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (St. Matt. vii. 6). Why should

the Lord have defended Himself before one who had not strength and purpose enough to turn His holy words to good effect? How many bitter speeches would have been saved; how many heartburnings would have been avoided; if men had imitated the Divine Master in respect to this silence which He maintained before Pilate. Pleading and argument are alike thrown away, the former, upon such as have neither feeling nor power; the latter, upon such as are wanting alike in true sense and knowledge.

He answered nothing. "For it would have been unworthy to answer one like Pilate, who doubted whether or not He ought to reply to the false accusations of the Jews" (o). Pilate could not for a moment, or upon any single point, have gainsaid this One, Who, besides His divine wisdom, was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"; One who "did nothing amiss." The strong man in his right mind would be ashamed to strike the little child; so also powerful and large animals will often protect and foster those which are small and feeble. Had Pilate been a worthy man, strong, true, and good, the Lord might have said something to him, which would have absolved him, in part at least, from his guilt

of passing the death-sentence upon the Holy Lord. To ask for mercy from tyrants, adds to the pain of bodily suffering, the further anguish and humiliation of having so asked in vain.

He answered nothing. "Thrice did Christ maintain this silence; before the high priest; before Herod; and lastly, before Pilate, who asked, 'Whence art thou?' But Jesus gave him no answer. In the first case He taught us to keep silent under the reproaches of false witnesses; in the second, to be silent in regard to vain questions; in the third, not to express the truth as to our own praises" (Bo.). It is hard to suffer reproach which is unjust without making any attempt at self-vindication; we are not all S. Pauls to be able to say "I take pleasure in reproaches," since they are but too apt to stir up the angry emotions of our weak and fallen nature; they appeal to our worst passions of anger, reproach and the like. It was the meekness and gentleness of Christ that triumphed over every form of obloquy and suffering. What saith the great Teacher Himself—"Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart;" a command this, with a promise attached to it; "ye shall find rest unto your souls." Rest, yes, a rest so true, so lasting; a great calm, that all the turbulent billows of this world's stormy

sea shall not be able either to mar or to misplace it. Then again He silenced vain questionings and doubtings; and these, moreover, exist in the present ferments of society, by which the Catholic Church is wrangled over; so disputed about that the "Bride of Christ" literally stands at the bar of private judgment; and the evangelical truths and traditions of all time are treated as so many figments of an obsolete theology, or revelation; which the Herod of unbelief—the society of the day—is but too apt to arraign at its own bar of ignorance and unbelief.

He answered nothing. "Holding in contempt all the accusations which had been brought against Him." (o.) It was not the man alone, but the accusations also, which the Lord held in supreme contempt. Why so? "Christ knowing that His whole life and His acts, as seen by the Jews, better than any words or defences, proved the falseness of the charges" (o.) made against Him. It is the guilty who are the most strenuous assertors of their own innocency; whilst such as have a clear conscience before God and man, can afford for a time to let judgment go by default. The very silence of the Lord in this sore conflict; between life and death, was the crowning point of the testimony

which established beyond any doubt the perfect purity and holiness of His entire life. God give you all His grace, so to live, that you need not dread the reproaches of men, nor fear what they can do unto you. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." Verily sin and cowardice go hand in hand together.

He answered nothing. "For what need was there for Him to speak before the judgment, since the verdict itself was a perfect victory? Christ triumphed when judged, being approved of as innocent, Pilate calling Him 'this just man'" (Am.) So by His very silence, the Lord left it to Pilate to declare His innocency. Of sin it is said: "Be sure your sin will find you out"; and it is equally true that holiness, goodness, love, kindness and all the other Christian virtues, though hidden for the time under the dark cloud of suspicion, or calumny, will sooner or later emerge into the full light of day and for all that you have done or suffered in secret "the Lord Himself will reward you openly."

He answered nothing. "Needing no defence, for, silent Himself, He aroused the Father, who girded Himself to defend Him" (Am.). As the Holy Jesus did, so should we try to leave ourselves wholly and unreservedly in the hands

of that same heavenly Father, Who so lovingly careth for us; and Who is so strong and mighty to save. Resignation to the will and way of another is often very hard to learn, being opposed to human nature and demanding a measure of faith in the providence of God which in times of great trial and affliction it is by no means easy for us to learn. Yet this same humble, faithful resignation, brings a sweet peace and a holy calm to us under the various sorrows, fears, troubles and disquietudes of this present state of life. It is a true note of the advance in the spiritual life when the soul answers nothing either to, by, or from itself, but in all quietness and strength brings itself to the Sacrament of Confession, answering nothing to the false accusations and insinuations of men, as mere men, but taking its griefs, sorrows, misrepresentations, to the priest of God, leaves the accusers to themselves, and places itself wholly, unreservedly, humbly, lovingly and thankfully in the hands of him who is by His appointment set apart to return a true answer on your behalf to any false accusations which may have been made against you. Never, for one moment, forget that the priest of God is "a mediator in action," to whom you retreat in silence, answering nothing to the Pilate of

this world, when he may wrongfully arraign your motives and your actions.

He answered nothing. "That He might give to us an example of patience, and so fulfil that which was written of Him by Isaiah" (liii. 11). (L.) In patience there remains a twofold victory, over the emotions of one's own soul, keeping them in due subjection and leading them to the foot of the Cross; also to a certain extent over the feelings and actions of others. In the case of our Blessed Lord it caused to shine out in all its full lustre His great prudence; His absolute and perfect gentleness; His entire and perfect reliance upon His heavenly Father; His perfect self-restraint. May it be for the strengthening of our own spiritual life, for our encouragement under every form of sorrow or suffering, that the Son of Mary "answered nothing."

Jesus Standing Still.

S. Matthew xx. 32—"Jesus stood still."

THE LORD stood still, waiting for the two blind men, who, sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out saying, "Have mercy on us O Lord, Thou Son of David." (S. Mark x. 48), and Luke (xviii. 40), tell us that one man, "Blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the wayside begging, alike calling for mercy; and for him also Jesus stood still and waited, and commanded him to be brought unto Him. In this, as in His other acts, the Lord became, by so doing, an example to ourselves. It is well, in this busy hurrying life of ours, to follow Elihu's counsel to Job, "O Job, stand still and consider the wondrous works of God"; whither our path in life is tending, and in what state of being our eternal future will be passed. *Jesus stood still.* The pre-incarnate Lord spake through the voice of Joshua, "at the cry of whom the sun and moon stood still to enable the Lord's people to complete their

victory over their enemies; how then should not Christ in His own person, stand still and wait in order to work a miracle of mercy." (D.L.) When Jesus sees on high the sad and struggling heart, he does not, as in this case, on the instant, stay and send the comfort of His healing grace and favour; He passes on, as it were, and the sorrowful penitent passes on alone, as if unheard and forsaken by Him. In patience, O Christian, possess ye your soul, "wait patiently for Him"; (Psalm xxxvii. 7) for "therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you"; for whilst the Lord appears to be waiting, He is still, by the ordering of His daily providences, trials, perplexity, and the like, working for you.

Jesus stood still. "To pass by is the attribute of human nature, to stand still, of the divine; the Lord as He passed by, heard the cry of the blind man, but when He restored his sight, he stood still," (G.G), since personal contact was after the ordering of His providence needful in this particular instance, He stood still, and touched. How little of this personal contact is realized by ourselves in the present artificial state of our refined Society. We meet together; visit each other, pass onwards from

one house to another, entertaining and being entertained; saluting one another with transient smiles, even with raised eyebrows, as the case may be; whilst the whirl of social life is not stayed for more than a bare moment or two. The real life, the real soul, its yearning and its aspirations are all confined within our breasts. Hence, in what is so-called Society, the sorrowing heart is not comforted; the needful warning is not given; and the word, so good when spoken in due season, never passes the lips of our so-called friends. Our blessed Lord did not award either to the two sightless men or to blind Bartimæus a mere sympathetic smile or a word of passing compassion, but He stayed by them, and He healed them. The few moments of his tarrying changed the whole remainder of their lives; relieved them of one of the sorest burdens of human life. As Saul, after his interview with Samuel turning to go back, found that God had given to him "another heart," so these poor blind folk, after they turned away from their short meeting with the Lord of mercy, found that whereas they had been blind, that now they had received the inestimable blessing of sight. Blessed indeed are they with whom in sacrament, adoration, and in prayer, Jesus stands still as it were, be it for a moment only.

Jesus stood still. But why did He this? "Because He knew that they believed that He might be able to cure them. Manifestly, their hearts were glowing with a fervent faith; for when the multitude commanded them to hold their peace, they would not be silent, but they cried the more. So that He did not ask them whether or not they had faith, but simply what they desired from Himself. He cured them with a touch that we may learn that all the members of the sacred flesh of Christ are the life-giving members of God"; (T) So the Lord stood still as rewarding their faith; He waited that He might be gracious unto them. "Blessed are all they who wait for Him" for He most surely, will stand still and wait for them. It is a blessed thing for us, in this busy active life of ours, to stand still awhile; and to tarry the Lord's leisure. Jesus in this Church, stands still in our midst; and if we would gain the full blessing of this holy place and worship, we must stay the current of earthly thought and care, as the Lord stayed His earthly journey for a little season, knowing as He did, that these blind ones, were waiting and trusting to receive from Him the blessing of healing.

Jesus stood still. "The Word was made flesh

and 'stood still' in man, and conversed with man, that He might have compassion upon us; that He might lead the blind in the way, and celebrate, as if a feast day, for those who were sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death" (A.N.). Even now as an indwelling presence He "stands still" in the hearts of the faithful, never leaving, never forsaking them. But the difficulty is to realize this fixed presence, for as the soul grows in holiness it learns to estimate more truly in what this presence consists; its glory; its dignity; it can hardly believe that it can be there. Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under the roof of my soul. Does Christ really stand still within me, making festival within me? Things are all dark and obscure within; faith weak; hope dim; hearts failing for fear; He stands still in the midst of our fears, perplexities, disappointments, and the fears are dried up: the perplexities disappear, for "the Way" is standing with us, directing our footsteps, and cheering our hearts, not ever hurrying on; the Lord stays to comfort the penitent; to direct the perplexed.

Jesus stood still. "Standing He illumines; pouring the light of Grace into us by the power

of His divinity." (G.) The darkened soul is like a darkened chamber to the child; filled with dreary phantoms; with distorted and corrupt images of life; with the twilight of doubt, so hard to be expelled; with the night of fear and dread, which seems to claim the soul as its very own. It is to a soul under the cloud of one or more of these calamities, that Jesus comes, and coming, standeth therein for a season, changing by his blessed presence even the very atmosphere and condition of the soul's life; it was darkness, now it is light in the Lord's presence.—Yes! this is all true enough, but for my own soul I crave for this blessed infusion of light and grace; and in this very Church I find it when the vesper lights are burning, and the incense at the Magnificat is wending its way along pillar and arch. Then are heard also the words of loving encouragement which light up the darkness which finds a lurking-place in my sin-ridden, humbled and faltering soul. He, Jesus, is pouring into our souls, the light, the life, the hope, the power, the grace which, radiating from His blessed presence, turns all darkness into light. What verily, is this true light the rays of which are falling so fast within me? It is Christ, the light

of glory within me, and therefore for the moment at least "Jesus stood still."

Jesus stood still. "Expecting them, for they were not able to follow Him, for they could not see their way": (L.S.) their want of sight stayed their progress. So does He in His infinite love and mercy stand still and wait for our souls. We are too blinded by the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; by our want of faith, moreover, to come to Him of our own accord; yet is He ever expecting us, and waiting for us, that He may become gracious unto us. Dare we disappoint this most holy and loving expectation of Him? God forbid. We see Him not; our spiritual sight is darkened, but yet He is standing still; we see Him not, our spiritual eyes being blinded, even in this our Church and worship, yet hold we to His "promise where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of you." Yes, our eyes may be holden that we see him not, but here He is according to His promise. Do we see Him in the sacrament of the Altar? He is standing in paten and in chalice. do we see Him blessing and absolving? He is standing still, and His Priest is speaking to us through Him. May we

listen to His voice with thankfulness, attention and love.

Jesus stood still. "There were many pitfalls, and broken rocks in Jericho, therefore the Lord 'stood still' that the blind men might be able to come unto Him" (J.) Does not His invisible presence stand still here in this church? Are there no eyes here to-day which are spiritually unenlightened? Happy, thrice happy this, should such be the case! But dare we assume it so to be? Where two or three are gathered together there is He in our very midst, only our eyes are alas! so holden that we cannot see Him. What is to be done? The blind were told of the blessed presence, they heard and believe, your Priest tells you that He is here; do you believe him? do you come unto Him in your hearts? Are your hearts and minds instead of coming to Him, going away from Him; fixing themselves upon the duties, pleasures, and expectations which may follow during the remainder of this very day, or upon the probable events of the coming week? In our pathway of life pitfalls and broken rocks are scattered all around, they stay our feet wheresoever we may go. But there is One standing still. One waiting for

you; One who will direct your path aright; One to whom you can be brought, who will clear away all mist and darkness in the soul. And so to give us hope, courage, and true help does the Lord stand still, as He did at Jericho.

Jesus stood still. "On account of His benignity, since the blind men could not follow Him" (L.S.); so of His great condescension and kindness He stood still. Such an incident as this is, to take the lowest possible ground, most refreshing when compared with our own careworn, selfish, and worldly nature. We feel the better for this record; it brings Jesus so closely and feelingly home to us; we see in it, not the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, but a divine, strong, and loving spirit bending itself down in loving sympathy to the two poor suffering blind ones. As He did, so do we recognize in Him the gentle and loving Elder brother of our race; not afar from us but as very nigh to us, as the Holy One who helpeth our infirmities as well as maketh intercession for us. We therefor behold Him not as our great high priest, as in the Sacrament of the Altar, but as the God man, our pattern in sympathy and love, teaching us that as He loved us so ought we also to love one another. The benignity of the Lord was

manifested in His entire and perfect goodness of heart, in His philanthropy, His grace and goodwill; not as a mere personal affection only, but universally extended over the whole of the race for which He shed His most precious blood. Oh! Christian soul! still blinded by sin, Jesus stands still by you, that by His sacramental grace He may open the blinded eyes of your poor soul.

Jesus stood still "when he called men to Himself, that He might have pity upon them, and so might celebrate a festival of light within them, and lead them to eternal day." (A.N.) He is standing whilst we are blind and cannot see Him. He opens our eyes, and as of old He becomes known to us, and we see Him "in the breaking of bread." If in this, does He not open our eyes that we may also see Him in the other sacraments of His Church, it is because we do not practically realize the fact that Jesus is in stillness standing by us, that our vision of the economy of grace is so limited, that we can only see part of it at a time. At one period we recognise one part of it; at another, it is present to the soul under a different aspect, or rather it is overshadowed by some dogma of the faith pressing more heavily upon us; con-

fession to-day, real Presence to-morrow; this particular ceremony now, and another one then. In their turn, the several sacraments seem one by one to burn within us, whilst we are walking along, with a vision more or less clouded, the disciplinal darkling path of our present life. Take hope and courage, and be not blind, as seeing through a glass darkly. Jesus is standing still and watching us to endow us with further light.

Jesus stood still, having gained for a short period "the stability of eternal quietude" (H.A.); so for the time representing, analogically, the Church triumphant. "Temporal things pass by; eternal things stand still." (A.) So just one momentary glance is being given to us of the final state of the holy; of the glorified soul and body standing still in the Paradise of God. At certain times and seasons may we, too, stand still on our journey of life, whilst in this, our trial state, we are waiting anxiously, patiently, longingly, and lovingly for the time when, in His blessed presence, we too, shall stand with the blessed Jesus for ever and ever.

Jesus Stooping Down.

S. John viii. 6, 7—"Jesus Stooped Down."

TWICE did the Lord perform this action when the woman taken in adultery was brought to Him by the Scribes and Pharisees, in the treasury of the Temple, as a test as to what He would do under the circumstances; and as a kind of snare by which they might cause him to stumble; "tempting Him, that they might accuse Him." "He stooped down," as if He heard them not; they continuing to ask Him, "He lifted up Himself" to answer them, then having answered, "He again stooped down." Afterwards when they had all gone out; and he was left alone with the woman "He again lifted up himself."

Jesus stooped down; "which they frequently are wont to do who are unwilling to reply to those asking things which are unanswerable and unworthy." (E.Z.) The Lord "stooped down to avoid a reply to his questioners; for once he did not deem them to be worthy of that soft answer

which turneth away wrath. The action was in itself a strong form of reproof. Well would it be for ourselves, if when any question be asked of us which ought not to be answered, we could act in a like manner. How many hard words; how much unkind feeling would be thus averted! These Scribes and Pharisees could not have any hold upon one, who declined to discuss the question with them. The Lord laid Himself open to no rebuke; He heard, and answered not again. A lesson this to us, and for all time, of self restraint; so natural is it to argue and to answer: so difficult is it to keep silence when the conviction forces itself upon the mind, that one is really in the right. We should never dare to think that the Lord came on earth to give us an example that we should not follow in His steps; yea, rather follow it in small, as well as in great and weighty matters. Yes! Greater is he that ruleth himself, than he that taketh a city. The Lord's message to us all is to learn of Him.

Jesus stooped down, "and by so doing showed the humility of His assumed humanity." (E.R.) He did not desire in the slightest degree to put Himself forward. His enemies desired Him to constitute Himself a judge, and an

arbitrator in this case. He will hereafter become the judge of the quick and the dead and we must all, both bad and good, stand one day before the judgment seat of Christ; the heavenly "Father hath committed all judgment unto the son;" yet as being man, He did not feel Himself called upon to pass sentence upon this poor fallen woman. How careful ought we to be, not to judge our fellow men. Alas! are we not all of us but too prone to pass judgment upon others? How often is His command forgotten or ignored—"Judge not that ye be not judged." How many scandals, heartburnings, rivalries, and jealousies would be averted, if we were only to stoop down and to hold our peace.

Jesus stooped down. "The Lord being asked to judge the sinful woman 'stooped down,' establishing a type of action for ourselves, that when we behold any mistakes or errors in our neighbours, we should not judge these by reprehending them, before we have humbly reflected upon the state and condition of our own conscience." (B.) Can any conscience be found so pure, true, and holy, that it can afford to sit in judgment upon others? Who art thou, it may be asked, who judgest another? Let

each one examine seriously and carefully his own heart—not a cheering and pleasant exercise this; but one of grave consequence, and of salutary warning, and the result will be the confession, that I am an impostor, who, laden myself with so many sins, yet dares in spite of these, to condemn a brother who may be in nearly all respects far better than I myself am; Deliver, I pray you, no sentence upon another, but rather stoop down, weighed heavily by an accusing conscience and depressed by a sense of sin and shame.

Jesus stooped down. "To signify that a judge ought not to stretch out his ears to any accusation which may be brought before him, nor to receive it with gladness, but rather with displeasure." (A.P.) Are not we but too often judges of one another; and do we not sit upon one another, and pass sentence upon one another with eargerness, bitterness, and with an evident delight? Do not many women rejoice in the fall of another who perhaps may have carried herself too proudly? Envy is very often the cause of this readiness to receive accusations against others, leading us to treat a passing slander as if it were an established fact, supported by the testimony of many wit-

nesses. Being desirous of vain-glory we are not careful as to how, and by what means, we lower the reputations of others; and then we pull down when we ought rather to build up.

Jesus stooped down, "as it were meet to digest with maturity the matter brought before Him" (A.P.), giving thereby a lesson to avoid all hastiness in forming our opinions of others. Intuition may be sometimes right; but evidence is the only true basis upon which any conviction must present itself to the mind.

Jesus stooped down, "to turn away his face, not so much from the adulteress as from her accusers. (A.L.) Satan is an accuser, and the Lord hates Satan in the same manner and degree that He hates sin. Now we are all too apt to connect sin with the sinner. This is wholly wrong, for a good, true, and holy person under a strong pressure of infirmity or circumstance may suddenly fall into a mortal sin, ever afterwards repented of, confessed, and absolved; whilst another soul, colder, harder, and under greater mental discipline, avoids the snare. Could the two souls be placed before the judgment seat, the sinner would be deemed worthy of pardon: the unconvicted one be brought under a just accusation of guilt. This

fact explains the Lord's saying, "joy shall be in heaven," etc. (S. Luke xv. 7). Jesus knew fully the history of the woman, also the minds of her accusers, and so He stooped down. This simple action was a revelation true and deep of the intensity of the sorrow for sinners, and the hatred of sin that moved His divine heart to its very depths. Learn we, then, not harshly to sit in judgment upon others; but the rather to examine our own poor, feeble, sinful hearts, and to be still before God.

Jesus stooped down. "Teaching us that before we pass judgment, we ought to incline, that is to condescend, in respect to our judgment; or in giving it to use discretion." (G.) Half the mistakes in the world arise from want of due consideration; from hasty judgments made without thought; we do not stoop down, and so lower ourselves as to be able sufficiently to enter into all the circumstances of the case before us. A hasty glance is taken, and upon this the opinion is formed. The Lord, from His pure and holy nature, must have hated every form of immorality and wrong-doing. The Lord "stooped down" as if to weigh all the former course of the offender's life, it might be her isolation, her poverty, the ill-treatment

she had met with; her evil training, her weak understanding; and her strong temptation to sin. In thousands of cases the question put by S. James may well be asked. "Who art thou who judgest another?" Have you never been tempted to commit any mortal sin, and having been tempted, have you never fallen? Were these said scribes and Pharisees who tried, and tried in vain, to tempt their Lord never been tempted themselves, and had they never fallen under their own special temptation? Who are ready to declare their own iniquity or to say that they were sorry for their sin? Pause, we then, before dealing too hardly with the sin of others; stoop down, think over your own trials and fallings away, so that this lesson of the Divine mercy and discretion may bring forth a just and tardy judgment from us when we may be dealing with and considering the failings of others.

Jesus stooped down, "because He willed most prudently to admonish those present that they should not hasten to pronounce sentence in cases of heavy offence;" (D.L.) that is, He stooped down in justice and mercy. This action teaches us not to be hasty either in forming an opinion or in pronouncing judgment,

to stoop down to and bend over the case lest any particular feature of it should escape notice. Is not God ever stooping down in His love and providence towards; and so giving us time for repentance and amendment of life. The parable of the barren fig-tree bears upon the case. Man would say "cut it down;" at once punish any transgression of the law; the providence of God in the command, "let it alone," gives time for reparation, teaching that while life remains there still remains the hope of better things to come. The sin is neither unnoticed nor ignored, but atonement may still be possible. The woman could have been pardoned at once, but where then would have been that conviction of guilt which caused her accusers to retire in self-accusation before the judgment had been delivered. When false reports are being circulated and the voice of calumny rises high, stoop down and pause ere your reply is given. This action of Jesus was not one of mercy only, but of justice, wisdom, and of love, all combined. "Who art thou that judgest another? 'In this minor act' of the Lord, we see as in His whole life, mercy placed before judgment, pardon before punishment."

Jesus stooped down, "bending Himself

downwards from the rigidity of justice." (LS.) The tenderness of the divine heart of Jesus was fully indicated by this action; vigorously just and righteous in his own nature, He had infinite pity, sorrow, and compassion for those who fell through the frailty of their own nature. The truly strong in love, in principle, and in action, are ever the most lenient and most gentle in dealing with such as are weaker than themselves. As a rule even the larger animals, such as the elephant, are more easily trained than those who are small in size. It was because the Lord's mind was so large, noble, and pure, that he did not hold up to scorn this poor fallen sister of humanity. The accusing Jews were convicted by their own consciences; the unaccusing Jesus lost for a moment His abhorrence of sin in His pity for the poor accused sinner. Is it not ever so in this world, that they who stand in the need of pardon themselves, are the least prone to grant this grace to others? Holding myself erect, vain, and self-satisfied, there is, there must be, a worm of conscience gnawing away within me, working out my retribution; the pangs of self-conviction increase, the hidden sin can lie concealed no longer, in terror of soul,

the heart speaks through the voice "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death"; the very silence of the echo conveying the answer, Who? May we, too, feeling for the failure of another, stoop down and stay the word of reproach which perchance may be rising upon the lips.

Jesus stooped down, "since by the earth is represented the human heart which is wont to render fruits of either good or evil actions," (A.L.); and to this human heart with all its frailties, its sorrows, did the infinite and immaculate heart of Jesus stoop down. What intense love is expressed in this simple action! What thought, what care! On our very way to Church do we not draw ourselves up as the poor and unkempt wanderer passes by us? In the public conveyances by road or by rail do not we gather up the very skirts of our garments lest they should be defiled by ever so slight a contact by the mean and shabby, be they ever so cleanly? Stoop down! not we in our pride of wealth, prosperity or social position. The poor destitute unchaste woman is brought before the All pure one, He signifies her condition by the action of His body, and He stoops down to identify that human nature

which is common to them both; the action was in itself a commentary upon the great truth that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the earth." If it should teach us nothing else, the stooping down has read to us at least this lesson, to call no man common or unclean.

Jesus stooped down. "Teaching that you should ever, when pronouncing sentence, look down to the ground and regard it to be the mother of us all, and that you, offending, learned so to do from this same earth." (D.) The world and the things of the world are the causes of our falling away from baptismal grace. As He stooped down, He saw as in a vision the whole history of the world pass as in a mirror before His eyes; its glory and its shame; the creation and the fall of man; and the world's restoration through his coming sacrifice. Could we but follow His thoughts in our thoughts, what a revelation would this vision reveal. The thought of it recalls the Prophet's command, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn;" Then looking back upon, not only our beginnings, but upon our past lives, we too must feel, shall I also not forgive? must I not pardon when my own

need of forgiveness is so great? Condemn, condemn! the evil spirit cries within us. I stoop down; I listen to the pleading of my higher nature; I stoop down from the loftiness of my assured knowledge, power, faith and holiness: I stoop down, I think, I remember, and out of this retrospective sadness, there is begotten a new germ of love, of faith, of hope; hatred has vanished, the law of forgiveness has permeated every fibre of my heart; no scribes and Pharisees; no woman do I see; but the Lord of Glory stooping down to shed compassion over a fallen soul.

Jesus Crying.

S. John vii. 37—"Jesus stood and cried."

TO cry, or cry out, implies intensity and earnestness either of speaking or of suffering; a cry also is used to awaken the careless; to emphasise teaching; or express strongly some emotion of mind or body.

Jesus cried. "In the Temple, teaching and speaking (S. John vii. 28), not merely coldly and unimpassionedly addressing the people. His was a cry of appeal; against the misrepresentation of His person, delivered in the Temple during the feast of Tabernacles. Energy of speech betokens energy and earnestness of thought and feeling; no coldly made statement; but a warmth of expression; it is also the fitting exponent of an unanswerable argument against falsehood and misrepresentation—So this was a cry excited by the calumny of the Jews against the person of their Saviour and Redeemer. In this case truly our Blessed Lord did well to wax warm in His defence

against the objections of his opponents. It was not a cry for mercy, but for simple truth and justice; it was an emphatic answer to an objection raised against the authority of His mission; not uttered for himself, but to vindicate the authority of His work and mission. Calmness and loving gentleness would have been wholly out of place. The lesson taught us hereby is ever to defend the truth; never to remain silent whilst it is being defamed and misrepresented. Each one in his separate way is bound to become a defender of the faith, whenever and wheresoever it may be attacked, and not to let judgment be given against it because of default. Moral courage is of a higher grade than mere physical courage, highly esteemed as this is, by men of the world. To hold and maintain a principle, demands a greater effort, than to face a bodily danger or attack. The Lord cried out or aloud, that all might hear His vindication of the divine nature of His person and mission.

Jesus cried when He stood in the Temple on the last great day of the feast, inviting the thirsty to come unto Him and drink (S. John vii. 37). "The Lord Christ called, and this not by speaking, but by crying. Do we thirst?

let us come to Him not by the feet but by the affections, let us come not by removing ourselves, but by loving. He migrates in the body who by the motion of his body, changes place. He migrates in heart who by the motion of his heart changes his affections." (A.) "If you are loving one thing when you were loving another you were not where you were. Therefore the Lord was crying to them; therefore He was standing and crying." (B.) Crying that all in the Temple might hear His message, His gracious cry of invitation to drink of the water of His grace and so be strengthened and refreshed to higher, more spiritual and worthier lives. So also now do His priests cry aloud in the Church to you to prepare for the coming judgment, and the end of all things in Advent; to repentance and humiliation in Lent; to rise to a holier and more spiritual life—one "hid with Christ in God" at Easter to ascend in thought to the Ascended Saviour at Ascension-tide, to seek the gifts and graces of God the Holy Ghost at Whitsunday, and to put on the several evangelical virtues of grace during the Sundays after Pentecost; not to change your place in life, but your spiritual estate and condition. He cried,

that all might hear Him, for He knew that their souls were dry and thirsting, and that He could be unto them a "well of living water, springing up in their souls unto life everlasting. May He of His infinite love and mercy give to us preachers, according to our measure and degree, to cry after His example; with His earnestness, with His love for souls; with His gracious invitation, to give us a foretaste of that angelical power with which "the spirit and the bride say come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17). May He give you all grace too, that you may listen to and hear the cry. For "to you is the word of this salvation sent;" "faith cometh by hearing," and this faith is the solid and true foundation of all good works.

Jesus cried, demanding faith in Himself (S. John xii. 44), and thus not for His own sake, not for His own honour and glory, but because when "He was teaching in the Temple there were many dull of hearing; dull of understanding, weak-minded" (A.P.), careless, darkened, distracted, and the like. It being needful to gain attention in some way to silence the murmuring, the Lord had to raise His voice to gain attention. How many of you frequent lectures, con-

certs, and the like, either to learn or to receive pleasure, going to listen thoroughly, with attention, and to gain all that can be gained from either the one or the other. How great is the number who frequent Church and yet who hardly deign to listen to the sermon at all—people of thought, of accomplishment, of high education, lovers of knowledge, if they be not lovers of learning. To such, indeed, the preaching of the Cross is weary foolishness, for in sooth they know nothing of the spiritual life, having never felt "the power of the world to come" acting upon them. "Dull of hearing, dull of understanding, weak-minded, distracted," and the rest what a wretched catalogue of hearers is this which the greatest preacher of his age attributed to the Jews assembled in their grand Herodian temple as the one which our blessed Lord was addressing at this time, and for the sake of whom He was compelled not merely to speak, but to cry, and to cry aloud. These defects were for the most part not inherent, but acquired. No one more ready, more bright, more keen of understanding in the bazaar, the forum, or the market-place, but very dull of hearing and sluggish when entering within the darkened shade of the

Temple. By their inattention they dishonoured that great Prophet and Redeemer which God had raised up for their deliverance from sin and death. Shame, O twofold shame, if we Christians, living in the fulness of the knowledge of revealed religion dishonour God by despising His divinely-appointed teachers, and so condemning not them only, but what is a far more serious offence, doing despite to Him, their great High Priest, through whom they receive their mission.

"*Jesus cried* with a loud voice" at the last time (S. Matthew xxvii. 50) whilst upon the cross, with the extremest effort of His strength, that we might know it to be true that which He had said: "I have power to lay it (My life) down, and I have power to take it again." (T.) So this last cry of His was the Lord's last lesson to us, of the discipline of the body, teaching us this lesson by the power exercised by His soul, over His poor, stricken, and ready-to-die crucified body; it gave it vigor to the very last, and until He willed it, His breath did not fail Him. His cry was strong in action, it was "a loud voice." In bearing pain, in quiet endurance of hardship, in making the best of sorrow and disappointment, in the

struggle against adverse circumstances, the strong heart within communicates its power to the body without; hence the higher our breeding the greater is our courage, and the more lasting is our resistance to untoward outward circumstances; its wants holding us with a firm hand, and yet compelled by the soul to do its bidding. Once let the soul become enfeebled and weak; let it give up its control and abdicate its power, the servant, the body, becomes the master; and the soul sinks down into an ignominious servitude to the flesh. The nature of the soul, says a great thinker, "is boundless power; and each power of it is soul; and all the powers are one." (P.O.) Again "The true Prince in a city is most imperious, most honoured, and most strong, and the ruler by nature; is most thoughtful, most reasonable; and the soul is the same. As the prince is the source of power in the State, so is the Soul, which is more honourable than the body." (M.A.X.). The Lord's last cry, His last lesson, has taught us also that the power of the soul over the body must be complete in effect, not leaving the half of its work undone, and it must be a ruler wise in purpose, so as not to lead the body into

unnecessary difficulties; and the rule of it must be a loving one, so as not to tax the body beyond its power of endurance. May the Lord's last cry be to us all His last lesson as to the ordering of our lives and duly using, and not abusing, either body or soul; that one day the cry may be exchanged for the shout of exultation.

Jesus cried, "when inviting sinners to salvation, that He might be heard by them." (B.S.) Earnest feeling ever begets both attention and sympathy. The pleading of an earnest voice is seldom if ever made wholly in vain. The crying of the Lord was not in denunciation and wrath, but it was a significant sign of His love and mercy. A cry from the heart reaches to the heart. Emotion, or movement of soul, begets emotion. The preachers who win souls to God are not the dialectitions and the philosophers, but, are those deep lovers of souls who cry to their hearers to repent of sin; to seek and to use the means of grace which its Church hath provided for their salvation. Earnestness ever carries conviction with it. The cold dry light of mere eloquence may arrest the attention but it can never win the soul to Jesus. The true cry involves the deep calling unto deep;

the passing of the earnestness of the one soul onwards to other souls by the intensity of the feeling which is manifested as an acting power. This is the spiritual magnet which draws other souls to listen, to feel and to follow as by an invisible impulse the voice of one earnestly crying to his fellow sinners to repent. May you so listen to the voice of God's priests, who cry unto you, in faith, love, in contrition and obedience.

Jesus cried with a loud voice (S. Matt. xxvii. 46). This cry expressed the intensity of desolation by which the whole humanity of the Lord was weighed down and tortured. "He seemed to be wholly forsaken by God, receiving neither consolation or help. He cries out therefore, that He is left; for although many have suffered much for God, yet God had ministered to them some consolation and refreshment, but He had wholly subjected Christ to grief that He should grieve as much as it was possible to grieve; though it is not to be understood of His divinity that it had forsaken His humanity or that it was separated from it. (L.) Our cry in the greatest distress of sorrow and affliction can never equal that of our Blessed Lord—our sufferings must ever fall infinitely short of His

—and therefore we should pray for grace to treat as light afflictions which are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. His cry was for us, for our manhood, which He carried, whilst our cry is for ourselves. As He was delivered and glorified, so shall we also, if we suffer with Him, surely be also glorified together. The cry of suffering humanity comes first, and the Halleluia of the risen and glorified body, will follow afterwards. There will be no cry in the new song hereafter to be sung before the throne of God. Crying and weeping endure but for the night of this life, but joy, pure, undimmed, and eternal, will be our portion in the morning of the resurrection.

Jesus cried. "From the cries which each one utters in dying, it can be learned whether he is a son of God, or truly a son of Belial." (L.G.) Such a cry is a confession of faith. It sums up a man's creed in an exclamation which reveals the true convictions of his heart. A world of thought and feeling pent up in the soul for many a past year, finds its truest and purest expression in this last cry. It is a revelation of that which had been all confined to self before. Our blessed Lord carried the

burden of the world's sin in His pure, gentle, and loving breast; before this, He had not lifted up His voice to reveal the inward secrets of soul. In silence He had borne His burdens and carried His griefs alone, no man being fully able to follow the purpose of His life and action. Learn we, depending upon His grace, to sorrow and suffer in silence; waiting for the full manifestation of our lives.

Jesus cried. "This cry was an echo corresponding to that voice with which God in Paradise was calling Adam (Gen. iii. 9.), and from which probably the centurion well understood the dignity of Him, uttering it." (L.G.) It was the cry not of a suppliant, but of a master to whom as in prayer He poured out His last appeal. So was Jesus, God and man, calling in this cry, as son of man for help and strength in those the last moments of His agony and weakness. When we come to die, may God of His infinite mercy, having preserved our lives from falling into mortal sin unrepented of, give us strength to cry to the holy Angels as God did to Adam; but when Jesus cried, it was to demand of the service and attention of an innumerable company of Angels to attend Him in service and adoration. As we would be

heard crying at the hour of death, so must we live in holiness, purity, self-denial, and love, that our cry may be heard in our time of need.

Jesus cried. "It was the man that cried as about to die by the separation of His divinity, for with His divinity he was freed from death; for death could not be unless life had departed, because life is divinity." (A.M.) So with ourselves our real life is the grace of God, and we do well to cry out in contrition for our sins lest we fall away from grace. The unholy soul is spoken of as "being dead in trespassses and sins." Sin could not enter in where divinity is present. For a moment, the divinity was separated from the humanity of the Lord, and then death passed upon Him, but not before. Cleave to that which is good; separate yourselves from the man of sin; dying daily to sin in the body; and then you may have a reasonable expectation of looking forward to a state of eternal glory; crying, too, as your last cry, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit."

Jesus cried "with a loud voice, that all might hear, and all might know, that with His last breath he called God, His Father. So His cry was a profession and confession of faith." (E.Z.) It was a cry full of confidence the

Son had fulfilled the Father's will and therefore in the last moment of His extremest agony He could call God His Father. We want to carry about with us more and more of this fatherhood of God; that this truth may be in all our thoughts to give us courage in danger; help in trouble; hope in disappointment, and strength in weakness; The last cry of Jesus implied a claim for paternity. Let us all strive hard to assert this claim, and when can we do this so strongly, so fittingly as in our eucharistic adoration saying, "Therefore we beseech Thee," and the rest.

Jesus Calling.

St. Matthew x. 1—"He had called unto him his twelve disciples."

CALLED to Himself or summoned them. It was a ministerial pre-ordained, solemn, and ceremonial act. He called the multitude to himself, when he was about to instruct them (*id.* xv. 10) saying, "Hearken ye, and understand ye all; (S. Mark vii. 14) the Lord also called to, or rather addressed, the woman with "a spirit of infirmity" (S. Luke xiii. 12) likewise with authority and with a purpose. It was a part of the mission of the Lord to call sinners to repentance. His calling was an act of speech, independently to be considered without reference to the nature of the call. This act which our Blessed Lord performed whilst on earth in the body He carries on now through His priests, who call in sacrament, prayer, and the several offices of the Church; since the echo

of this call can never die out so long as a single soul remains unsaved, or the order and grace and the operation of apostolical succession exists on earth.

He called; with "a call which made his speech acceptable, giving to it both honour and service." (c.) All changes, and every form of progress demand a pre-disposition for their acceptance, and those amongst us in this Church now who by prayer and preparation have fitted their minds, and attuned their thoughts for the reception of divine truth, have hereby received a call, and so will receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save the soul. The call of Jesus Christ is one which is ever powerful, for it appeals to all that is holiest and best in our poor, truly fallen nature. It is like the sweet echo of some soft music which had been heard long ago and forgotten until now; when it comes back again to the heart invested with the hallowed memories of associations now passed away, and never to return. A call so full of grace that Saul the persecutor was unable to resist it, though he strove so hard "to kick against the pricks," the honour and service of this call altered the whole order of the Apostles' lives. Is the

spiritual voice of Jesus hushed for evermore? is it mute? and never again to be heard? God, in His mercy forbid that it should be thus with us. Lost, desolate, and forsaken should we be, if the Master's call had lost its spell. But it is not so, for as calling and speaking to us by His spirit, He is ever inciting us to better and holier lives; and so it incites us to a stricter devotion, which leads on the soul to render Him greater reverence, and a heartier service. His very choice was in itself a call to His disciples: "ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit," (S. John xv. 16); that is, the honour and service which is attached to this call.

He called "with a call that was susceptive and stimulating"—Because He was about to propose to the multitude (S. Matt. xv. 10.) some deep teaching which was full of Christian ethics. He did not simply indeed at first introduce it to the multitude; but He called them first. It was a call for their attention. (R.M.) It is sad to think how needful is it to make such a call to all congregations of the faithful wheresoever assembled, and at all times and seasons. The mind is so deeply imbued with the things

of this lower-life; with the things of time and sense; that it is but too apt to lose its taste for the things of God which alone are spiritually discerned, and to fix itself upon higher things, even in God's own house. The mention of a local or personal fact arrests in a moment thoughts which had been straying far afield. It is so very natural for us to fix our minds and thoughts upon things that are temporal as belonging to this time and life; and so hard, so very hard, to give all our thoughts, desire, and care, even for the shortest possible time to those things which are eternal.

He called, "The blind, crying to Himself (S. Mark. x. 49), and with them the people desiring the knowledge of the truth, and He is still calling them by His preachers, to whom He has committed the word of faith, bidding them to arise, and to be of a more equal mind; to arise from the torpor of sin, that they may obtain the hope of salvation." (B.)

He called, "That He might take pity; that He might help; that He might liberate." (A.N.) That is to say, not for Himself but for ourselves, that He might do us good. "He called" men to Himself, not for Himself but for themselves; that they coming to Him might

in, and through Him, possess all things. He takes pity upon us, and He calls us because He pities us, who even do not understand that so sorely we need His pity; we being so spiritually blind and we know it not; we are weak as to the things of God, and we feel it not; we cannot help ourselves, and until we try to walk along the King's highway of the Holy Cross we feel not our decrepitude or our weakness. To do us good, then; to supply some great defect; to help the soul as none other than He can help it, He calleth us to Himself; from death to life; from sin to Holiness; from darkness to light; from sorrow to joy.

He called "The twelve disciples, and gave them power," though they were few men; for it is few who pass in through the narrow gate." (T.) What comfort is this to ourselves! We are all of us small in faith, love, and holiness, thought, in the power to resist temptation. This present life, is to the best of us but a day of few and small things; so limited as to duration, scope, and endeavour—yet the Great, the Infinite, the Lord of all, is ever calling us to prepare by the few beams of grace for the greatest of glory, blessing and immortality. It is because we are few in faith that our number

must be increased in love, since our love for the best and holiest things has become so faint; in spiritual understanding, for our sense of it has become so enfeebled by our contact with the world. When we are few and weak in ourselves, then does Jesus enter into us calling us to Himself in the blessed sacrament of the Altar.

He called "those whom He would appoint to be the sowers of the faith, that they might propagate the help of human salvation throughout the world." (A.M.). Mark, not alone for their own sakes, but that they might extend to others the blessings and the grace which they had themselves received; in order that they might make others partakers of the benefit. The right-minded child is ever ready to distribute any gift that it might receive amongst the brothers and sisters of the family. We Christians should try to impart to all with whom we come in contact these mysteries of the faith of which God has made us the recipients.

"*He called*" the multitude, the common people, and why? Because "He left those (the Scribes and Pharisees) as if incurable. So when He had imposed silence and confuted, He turned His discourse as being more worthy

and bade them hear." (E.) S. Paul also left the Jews and turned to the Gentiles. God's spirit will not always strive with man. When men love darkness, rather than it not unseldom happens that the light is withdrawn from them, and they are then allowed to remain in their darkness; so in the world, favours ungratefully received and undervalued are after a time withdrawn. The Lord favoured the multitude and turned away from the Scribes and Pharisees as being unworthy to hold any further converse with. What a lesson ought this to be to ourselves, that we receive not the grace of God in vain; for receiving it continually in vain the grace will most surely be withdrawn.

"*He called*" His disciples; "those whom He had destined to be the propagators of the faith, the sowers of the faith" (C.A.) It was a call of twelve of these, the sowers of the faith, to a higher mission. So ever is it even in this world that they who are faithful over few things, as a rule are called to be rulers over many things. The little, be it what it may, which is used well, will be expanded into many things. Let us never despise the day of small things, whether of grace or of nature; make the most of them and turn them to their best

account, and they will most surely lead to higher endowment, spiritual or temporal.

He called "to himself those who were afar off that He might make them partakers of His good things; that He might communicate to them His charity; that He might impose faith; that He might strengthen them by hope." (A.N.) Then, afar off, who would now have come to Him had He not called them. How many joys, opportunities, openings in life, should we have lost if a call had not been given to us to take advantage of, and to seize upon the occasion? The "love of Christ" is shed abroad and around us on all sides, it is the call which brings it home to our hearts and consciences. What is true of one is equally true of the other two theological virtues, faith and hope. We read a book containing one special gem of thought; we passed it by unnoticed; a friend calls our attention to it; it had otherwise escaped our notice; and the book henceforth becomes very precious unto us.

He called the Magdalen in the garden, the weeping, loving Magdalen; and the call was a very simple one, summed up in one short word of four letters, "Mary;" and yet it was sufficient to remove all doubts as to the reality

of her Lord's resurrection. It was a full confirmation of a previous belief. As the old hymn runs:—

> "*Linguam novit et non manum,*
> *Lingua Jesum indidit.*"
>
> She knew the tongue and not the hand,
> The tongue emprinted Jesus' brand.

The call revealed to her, morever, the Lord's blessed and sacred person; she knew Him directly He called her; it dispelled her grief, it poured into her soul the "oil of joy," and exorcised from it the spirit of heaviness. The simple single word was, indeed, a call of love.

He called with a call of power for Lazarus to "come forth." "How mighty and great was this call, it reached to the unseen world; it was so mighty and strong neither death nor the princes of the dead were able to withstand it; it reached to the heavens above, to earth below, and to the profound abyss." (STA.) To hear it was to obey it for all who had passed through, and beyond this our present state of probation and free will. Shall this, our trial state, be suffered by us as creatures possessed of free will, to pass by us unheeded? My son, my daughter, come forth from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. Even now does Jesus

call us from the old life of sin to the new life of grace.

He called, and only once on each several occasion—To-day if we will hear his blessed voice and obey it ere its echo dies away. How many souls will be lost for ever, for all eternity, who when the call came home to them, passed it by, waiting for another opportunity which may never come? Do not many remember how when a special opportunity of repentance touched their souls they cast it away waiting for another and a more "convenient season" which has not, and perhaps will not ever come to them again? Does not the same thing often happen in life? the call, the providential opening has been granted, it was passed by unheeded, and the remainder of life is now flowing onwards in "softness" and bitterness and disappointment.

He called, and in love and mercy He is still calling us by the love which He bears to us; for whom he laid down his precious life; by all the sufferings which He endured for us men and our salvation. He is stretching out to us His bleeding hands and pleading with our souls in accents fraught with the deepest sorrow "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life."

Pleading is He within us by His spirit; calling us to the renunciation of self and to follow Himself in suffering and self-denial.

He called—and hath called you. Alas! but too often by the sacrament of His love, and by all the means of grace which He hath bestowed upon you all unworthy of them as you are—Listen to his sweet voice, rise up and obey Him.

He called. "He calleth to Himself; unhappy therefore is he who being called refuses to come to Him; who does not wish to hear, and who neglects the call." (A.N.) Let it not be so with you, O Christian soul. Hear, accept, rise up and obey the call and follow wheresoever He may deem it best to lead you. Arise thou then from thy couch of sin, it is now nigh time that we awaked out of sleep. May He pardon us and purify us from all sin, that we, as virgin souls, may follow Him, the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth, since

> He for your toil will give you rest,
> A quiet harbour is His breast,
> The one asylum when possessed. (Boe.)

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AL.—Alcuin.
AM.—S. Ambrose.
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LS.—Ludolph of Saxony.
LA.—A Lapide.
LG.—Louis of Grenada.
LB.—Lucas Brugensis.
LJ.—S. Laurence Justinian.

M.—Maldonatus.
MAX.—Maximus of Tyre.

N.—Nicephorus.

O.—Origen.

PC.—S. Peter Chrysologus.
PCl.—S. Peter Calestine.
PL.—Plato.
PO.—Porphry.

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RE.—Remigius
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T.—Theophylact.
TH.—Theodoret.
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